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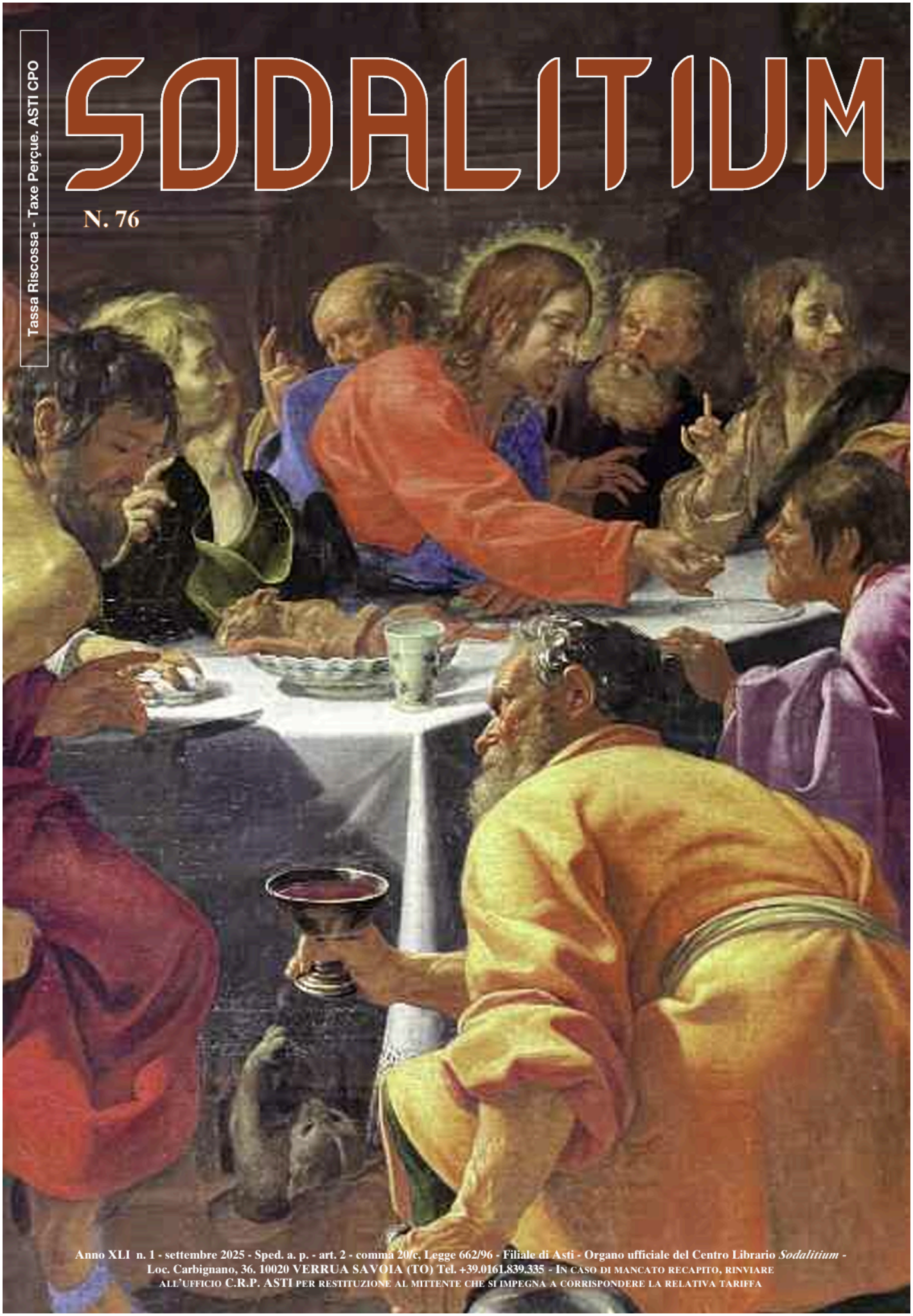

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On the Cover: The Last Supper (Simone Vouet 1590-1694, Museo apostolica di Loreto); Saint John is to the right of Our Lord.

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Editorial

"Nothing has changed": these words express our thoughts well. Beyond the inevitable differences in character, education and personality, Leo XIV is in perfect continuity with "Francis", as he was with all his predecessors, from Paul VI on.

This issue of *Sodalitium* was already in the pipeline, when the then current occupant of the Apostolic See (J. M. Bergoglio) was hospitalized at Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome with serious health conditions. We therefore considered it appropriate to delay our launching of this new issue of the magazine so that we might evaluate the probable imminent evolution of the situation of authority in the Church. The death of "Francis" and the subsequent election of Robert Francis Prevost ("Leo XIV") now affords us the opportunity to present the Institute's opinion to our readers. In this regard, I gave two homilies that can be heard on our channel: one on the occasion of the death of J. M. Bergoglio and the run-up to the conclave, and the other after the election of R. F. Prevost, commenting on the *Communiqué* written by our Institute that we publish in this issue. This communiqué expresses the position and

beliefs of the *Mater Boni Consilii Institute* and our magazine, *Sodalitium*.

The aforementioned communiqué is entitled "*Nothing has changed*", and these words express our thinking quite well. Beyond the inevitable differences in their character, formation and personality, the so-called Leo XIV is in perfect continuity with "Francis", just as he was with all his predecessors, from Paul VI onwards. On the other hand, it was also like this in the Church when it was in a state of order: beyond the individual Pontiffs, some saints, others not, some more deserving than others - what Saint Leo the Great said in his time always applies - the very words that Pius XII wanted to be recited in the Divine Office, in the proper of a Supreme Pontiff: *"Et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum: et quodcumque ligaveris super terram erit li gatum et in coelis: et quodcumque solveris super terram erit solutum et in coelis. Ma net ergo dispositio veritatis, et Beatus Petrus, in accepta fortitudine petrae perseverans, suscepta Ecclesiae gubernacula non reliquit. In universa namque Ecclesia, Tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi, quotidie Petrus dicit; et omnis lingua, quae confitetur Dominum, magisterio hujus vocis imbuitur. Haec fides diabolum vincit et captivorum ejus vincula dissolvit. Haec erutos mundo, inserit coelo et portae inferi adversus eam praevalere non possunt. Tanta enim divi nutus soliditate munita est, un eam neque haeretica umquam corrumpere pravitas, nec pagana potuerit superare perfidia"* ["*I will give to thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven: Whatsoever you shall bind upon the earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon the earth shall be loosed also in heaven. The order established by Jesus Christ still remains; and Saint Peter, who has preserved the solidity of the rock until this day, never abandoned the government of the Church over which he was entrusted. Within the whole Church, in fact, Peter is saying daily: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and every tongue that acknowledges the Lord is instructed by the teaching of this voice. This faith defeats the devil and loosens the bonds of those held captive. It makes those whom it has snatched from the earth to enter heaven, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. For it has been fortified by divine power with such firmness that the wickedness of heretics can never corrupt it, nor the perfidy of pagans overcome it."*]

The first appearance of R. F. Prevost from the loggia of Saint Peter after his election on May 8, 2025 (Photo Wikimedia Commons CC BY-SA)

Beyond the persona of any single Successor of Peter, the faithful listen to the voice of the Apostle, which is the same as that of Christ "*cujus etiam dignitas in indigno herede non deficit"* [*whose dignity does not diminish because of the heir's unworthiness.*]

Many faithful - even within the vast, so-called "traditionalist" world - have written about the new elect based on his mode of dress, his meekness, or on his devotion… but few ask themselves this question: does he adhere to the new doctrine of Vatican II, and to the reforms that flowed from it, or not? The answer is obvious, and the occupant himself was at pains to provide it publicly: obviously, yes. And in this case, the other question that a Catholic faithful to Tradition, faithful to the revealed Faith and to the Magisterium of the Church which should have been resolved long ago (and clearly it has not been for everyone) should ask is this: is the teaching of Vatican II (on ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, collegiality, membership of non-catholics in the Church, religious freedom, aggiornamento and reform) in conformity, or in contradiction, with the Faith, the Tradition, and the Magisterium of the

Robert Prevost receives the Cardinal's berretta from Bergoglio

Leo XIV (Photo Wikimedia Commons CC BY-SA

Catholic Church? And since there is NO continuity, but rather contrarity and even contradiction, one cannot be the successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ, while occupying the Apostolic See, if he adheres to "heretical depravity" or programmatically favors it, even if on a single article of Faith,. My impression, however, was that for many baptized people who claim or believe themselves faithful to Tradition, Vatican II, with all its reforms (*in primis*, that of the liturgy and finally ending with the one, *in fieri*, of the Papacy itself), has now been fully absorbed and digested. Humanly speaking, this is understandable after so many years; in the eyes of Faith, however, it is not.

For this reason, with deep sadness, we say and repeat: nothing has changed. And if nothing has changed IN REALITY (and not in the "Pope" as many would imagine, as if everything had returned to order after the nightmare of the Bergoglian parenthesis), then the theological thesis that best describes this reality in the light of Faith must not change either: the *Thesis* called *Cassiciacum* (elaborated by Father M.-L. Guérard des Lauriers O.P.). This thesis recognizes the one elected by a conclave as a "pope" *materialiter* (in that, juridically, the Church has not yet declared such an election null), but not a Pope *formaliter*, in whom we can recognize the voice of Peter and the infallible authority of Christ every day. In light of this theological perspective, we navigate safely between the reefs of a "conclavist sedevacantism", which is not ours, and a "Lefevbrism" that recognizes and resists the "legitimate authority". Even less do we recognize ourselves among the self-deluded people who acclaim Bergoglio's successor. We are old enough to remember a similar (though different) phenomenon: upon the death of Paul VI, almost all "traditionalists" (even at Écône) believed a nightmare had ended, and they acclaimed John Paul II despite the errors/horrors of his first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*. It took the sacrilege of Assisi to partially open the eyes of some…

Our bitter comment is not despairing; while we place no hope in the modernists (whether they are advanced or conservative), we have not lost hope in the promises of Christ (to whom the Church belongs) and in the maternal intercession of Mary, Mother of Good Counsel.

Commemorative stamp for the Sede Vacante MMXXV

Errata corrige
(Benedict XV and Marc Sangnier)

In the special issue of *Sodalitium* (no. 74) on Monsignor Benigni, it appears - from a published source - that Benedict XV received Marc Sangnier on January 29, 1922. The date is certainly inaccurate, if for no other reason that Benedict XV died on January 22 of the same year. After checking the sources, this is what emerges: Benedict XV received Marc Sangnier twice. The first time was in February 1917 (HENRI COSTON, *Dictionnaire de la politique française*, vol. 1, p. 958). The second time, together with Georges Hoog, was on January 29, 1920 (and not 1922), as is shown by JACQUES PRÉVOTAT, *Les catholiques et l'Action française. Histoire d'une condemnation 1899-1939*, Paris, Fayard, 2001, p. 389 and JEAN DE FABRÈGUES, *Le Sillon de Marc Sangnier,* Librairie Académique Perrin, 1964, p. 279.

Communiqué of the Istituto "Mater Boni Consilii"

Everyone knows that Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the occupant of the Apostolic See under the name Francis, died on April 21, 2025, and that on May 8, Robert Francis Prevost, occupant of the Apostlic See under the name of Leo XIV, was elected his successor.

Many people have asked our little Institute for its position on the current situation. The answer is simple: nothing has changed.

The Church will always have, at least potentially, a successor to Peter (1st Vatican Council, dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Æternus*, ch. 2. DS 3058). Therefore, it must be possible to elect a successor of Peter, even in exceptional circumstances and with exceptional methods, as occurred at the Council of Constance to resolve the Great Western Schism.

As for the material aspect of the Papacy, therefore, consisting of human acts such as election and external acceptance by the elect, Leo XIV is still a "pope" materially, as this election has not (yet) been declared invalid by the Church, and therefore he occupies the See of Peter.

As to the formal aspect of the Papacy, on the other hand, consisting in receiving from Christ the fact of being one moral person with Him, and therefore by consequence exercising with Him the power to govern, teach and sanctify the Church, Robert Francis Prevost, the elect of the conclave and the occupant of the See, is not formally Pope. He cannot, in fact, have the objective and habitual intention of achieving the good/end of the Church, since he adheres to the errors taught in Vatican II, worsened by the 'subsequent magisterium", as well as the disciplinary and liturgical reforms that put them into practice - all errors already condemned many times by Roman Pontiffs and the Catholic Church.

Consequently, the deprivation of Authority which began in the Church at least from 1965, unfortunately continues today, and the priests belonging to the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii cannot and do not name the occupant of the Apostolic See in the canon of the Mass.

We invite all faithful Catholics not to live their own spiritual lives, and their own convictions about the current situation of authority in the Church based on sentimentalism, worldly criteria or superficial impressions, on their own interests or on presumed private revelations, but according to revealed Faith, the magisterium of the Church and sound theology.

He who was elected by the conclave and is the occupant of the See who wanted to choose the name of Leo will be able to find, if he so desires, in the magisterium of Leo XIII the most splendid affirmation of the faith of the Church, and the clearest condemnation of all modern errors which, unfortunately, creep and spread "in the the very bosom and heart of the Church" (to use the words by which Saint Pius X condemned modernism), after the ill-fated Second Vatican Council.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel, our patroness, to whom the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII and the Augustinian family were so devoted, counsel and enlighten minds, so that the terrifying storm that has been shaking the Catholic Church for so long, with the consequences of the loss of so many souls: Domine, salva nos, perimus [Lord, save us, we perish]!

Verrua Savoia, May 10, 2025

Theology

"By what title…?"

Father Piergiorgio Coradello

Introduction

Materialiter. It is difficult to find, in the *non una cum* world, a topic that causes more division than that of the *materialiter papacy*.

As our readers know, the Mater Boni Consilii Institute holds the Thesis of Cassiciacum. This thesis, the work of Father Guérard des Lauriers, was the culmination of his *non una cum* journey, which began with his rejection of the *Novus Ordo Missae* in 1969. Developed during the 1970s, and completed in the second half of that decade to provide a response to the emerging "crisis in the Church", this thesis makes it possible to demonstrate that Paul VI and his successors are not Popes. Their behavior - habitually contrary to the glory of God and to the salvation of souls (the so-called "objective **good-end** of the Church") - is incompatible with the purpose of the papacy. In fact, they demonstrate that they do not want it, whether consciously or not. Furthermore, some of their teachings lead to the same conclusion as they contradict the doctrine of the Church. This demonstrates they do not enjoy infallibility in teaching, which is one of the prerogatives of the papacy.

This, thanks to the thesis, is what we can confirm even as simple believers and priests - that is, as private persons. We must regulate our Christian life in accordance with this conclusion. It follows that to recognize as Pope someone who is not (someone who is actually working against the good of the Church), to celebrate or assist at a Mass in union with him, to follow his ordinances and teachings, means we are participating in such errors. [1] On this point, all those who are faithful to Tradition are in agreement.

The Latin word *titulus* originally indicated an inscription or an evaluation; in any case the Romans used it to mean a qualifying of something, illustrating it, or explaining it. In the field of law, "proper title is the event, distinct from the material fact of consigning something, which justifies the taking possession of it." The Title, in other words, legitimizes the taking possession of an asset.

The thesis, however, postulates that, as private persons - priests and faithful - we cannot go any further. Although Paul VI and his successors do not have papal authority, an ecclesiastical, juridical authority is necessary in order to proceed to have a new and true Pope [2]. Lacking this, the individuals in question, while not being true Popes, remain "popes" *materialiter*. This means that they retain what materially contributes to constituting a Pope. However they do not have that which would constitute them as such *formaliter* - that is, truly Popes - which is the papal authority that comes from God. They place an obstacle to this authority, whether consciously or not. Nevertheless, despite lacking authority, their condition allows for the continuity of the successors of the Apostles, a continuity that must last until the end of time (even if it is purely material continuity, and therefore one lacking in authority: we will talk about this again).

It is this point of *materialiter* that the so-called "totalist" sedevacantists dispute. According to them, Paul VI and his successors are not "popes", not even *materialiter*, the Apostolic See is not in any way occupied. To be *materialiter*, and having even a passive role in the continuity of the Church would be to concede too much to someone who has no Authority in the Church. Therefore leaving other divergences aside

[3], I propose to illustrate an aspect of *materialiter* and its consequences. To do this, I will explain the concept of a "title".

I would like to remind you that I am not a theologian. If my intuitions regarding "title" are wrong, it is not my intention to misrepresent the metaphysics of Father Guérard des Lauriers. I also want to note that this article can be understood without taking into account the footnotes which go into specialized details that risk "disrupting" the flow of the article, especially for those who are not specialists in this field.

What titles are we talking about? What is a title?

The Latin word *titulus* originally indicated an inscription or an evaluation; in any case the Romans used it to mean *qualifying something*, *illustrating* it, *explaining* it.

We have all heard phrases and expressions such as: "You are not entitled [non hai il titolo] to do this". "He became the sole heir [a pieno titolo]." "He is the successor to a universal title [a titolo universale]." "The court granted him an executive title [titolo esecutivo]." "I told you this just for the record [a titolo di cronaca]." "I am telling you this just for your information [a titolo informativo]." "He provided a service free of charge [a titolo gratuito]." "I have the title of purchase [il titolo d'aquisto]." "You must get a travel document [un titolo di viaggio]."

In each of these examples, and particularly in the field of law, "*proper **title** is the event, distinct from the material fact of delivering the thing, that justifies the taking of possession of it.*" [4]

The title, in other words, legitimizes my taking possession of a good. A testamentary will *justifies* my taking possession of an inheritance; the discovery of an object that belongs to no one *justifies* my becoming its owner; and so on. This house is mine *because* I inherited it, this mushroom is mine *because* I found it, this object is mine *because* I purchased it, this salary is mine *due* to the work I performed under contract for it, I have these rights *because* of the office I received, etc. These are just a few examples to show how one cannot legitimately possess something or act legitimately without having a title to this possession or action. I cannot claim a movable or immovable asset, etc., and more generally a right, unless there is a cause that legitimizes my taking possession of it: in other words, I do not legally possess something unless I have title to it.

Note that title provides the justification, but it is not yet the taking of possession: the two may be more or less chronologically close, but they are not the same thing. If I conclude a purchase, the seller often immediately hands me the goods; however, for example, there is a passage of time from the death of a testator until the execution of their will! Therefore, title is prior to entering into possession, which is the final result. They are two separate things: the title presents itself as a condition for being able to have a legitimate possessor. It falls within the order of material causality (the *material cause* is the subject that will then become the final result).

What interests us in this article is title as it functions *in the Church*, not as to ecclesiastical goods (like benefices, incomes, moveable and

The cover of Domenica del Corriere for the 1958 conclave upon the death of Pius XII

immovable assets) but as regards ecclesiastical offices, and more precisely as regards the offices that entail the exercise of jurisdiction (that is, the public power to govern souls with regard to eternal life) and more generally of an ecclesiastical power. In this specific context, the title is *the cause that allows one to obtain this jurisdiction or power*.

In the Church, jurisdiction and the power of authority are always based on some title: to have the power to govern souls, it is necessary to have some right to it (conferred by the title). It is, in fact, a power that is both spiritual and visible, to be exercised in a spiritual and visible society (the Church); therefore the possession of this power requires first of all spiritual causes, but also visible causes; the spiritual part being the communication of power by Christ or by the superior and, if need be, the internal acceptance on the part of the elect; the visible part, the title, is constituted by mandate and, if requested, by the external acceptance on the part of the elect [(5)]. If we were to deny that in the Church authority is always, even today, based on some title, we would admit the defectibility of the Church as Christ founded it; material and spiritual, both a human collective and the mystical Body of Christ, human and divine in every aspect, as its Head, so like its members.

In short, in every ecclesiastical office, to receive the corresponding power, a title is required, that is, a mandate that serves to qualify its recipient, to delimit the purpose, the possible actions, the time, the subjects, and the place of exercise of that power that is granted.

The questions we ask ourselves are: what type of title is necessary to justify obtaining ecclesiastical power? And what titles exist in the Church today? This is what we will try to better understand.

The kinds of title and their consequences

The law teaches that there are three kinds of titles: *True title*, *Putative title*, and *Colored title* [(6)]. Of these titles, only the first is properly *a title to something*, while the others are false - and yet, however, as we shall see, they are actually *titles* and have their effects, and, as such, they are not without consequences. Let's explain what is meant by each of them.

• **A True title**. This occurs when a genuine right to the possession of something is actually granted. A few examples will help clarify.

Let's take an author (of a book, a song, or an invention): for him, *creation* is a title to the possession of the thing and its fruits: the patent, the copyright, the intellectual authorship. Someone who, walking in a crowded place, finds a coin on the ground: it is impossible to know who dropped it; what in technical language is called "*the seizure of an asset*" which belonged to no one, is for him a title to the possession of the coin. A tree grows on my property without my having planted it, and begins to bear fruit: the so-called "*accession*", that is, the increase of my property in a completely natural way is for me a title to possess the fruits of this tree. And finally, an example that each of us has experienced many times: any *agreement among men*, any contract, whether a hasty one made at the supermarket checkout counter or one for a large purchase, is a title to take possession of something: whether by sale, inheritance, donation, etc.

In the ecclesiastical sphere. A priest is appointed parish priest of a town: the *appointment* entitles him to the rights consequential to the care of the souls there. A cleric is entrusted with an apostolic visitation of a diocese: the mission given by the superior entitles him to have and to exercise the powers required for the task of the visitation.

In all the cases described, there was an event that fully legitimized a right.

• **A Putative title.** In this case, *while there was no grant*, there is some reason that leads one to suppose the contrary. There is a presumption that some title exists: but yet in reality there is no real title! This pure presumption, which must be reasonable, and widespread (common) [(7)], comes to constitute a title, called "putative". In cases where the law provides, the putative title can legitimize a right.

For example, following natural law, the Italian Civil Code provides for "presumptive statute barred" (Article 2957): the law allows the

Canon Raoul Naz, distinguished Canonist

presumption that, after a certain period of time, a debtor has satisfied his debt; and therefore, the creditor who has not collected the debt ceases to have any right to payment. And so the debtor, without any legitimate (nor even apparent) cause and therefore by a merely putative title (*the law deems that*...), becomes legitimately free from a burden, and is entitled to this freedom. Another example is usacapion: without any sale taking place between the de facto holder of an asset and the true owner, the former acquires it and the latter loses it: without any legitimate cause (not even apparent), and therefore thanks to a merely putative title, the possessor becomes the legitimate owner of an asset.

The Church supplies the jurisdiction to a priest who lacks the necessary jurisdiction to hear confessions, if only that priest has a putative title to it (Canon 209): for example, a priest who enters a Church that is not his own and sits in a confessional would easily be considered by the faithful to have title to hear confessions: by virtue of this reasonable presumption, even if that priest were without jurisdiction in that place or over those people, the Church supplies his jurisdiction, and the confessions would be valid (regardless of the intentions of this priest, who may be in good or bad faith).

And this supplied jurisdiction is provided not only in the internal forum of confession, but also for jurisdictional acts in the external forum: just as it is provided, for example, for the obtaining of an ecclesiastical benefice (Canon 1446) [8].

• **A Colored Title.** The genesis of a true title occurs completely according to the rules; the formation of a putative title occurs through pure presumption; a **colored title**, on the other hand, is a middle ground between the two. This occurs when all the steps that would normally confer a true title are carried out, but the process is *vitiated by some substantial and hidden defect* that renders it invalid. It is therefore a null title, but one that *appears*, or *seems to be* valid by virtue of some legal presupposition; it is a title that has only the *color* of a true cause, only the appearance of truth, but lacks some essential attribute. It differs from a putative title because the latter is not supported by anything that could constitute a title, whereas for a colored title, there are flawed elements that *seem* to constitute a true title.

Even a colored title, in cases specified by law, is sufficient to justify taking possession; and it is important to note that a colored title is not transformed into a real title: it remains a colored title, and yet it still justifies taking possession.

An example is a “marriage” in which there is a hidden defect (one of the two engaged parties does not give a true consent, or is not fit for marriage): the exchange of consent, which normally constitutes a marriage, is vitiated, and therefore null and void, and there is no marriage; however the act *took place*, and thus has consequences, *appearing* to be true and legitimate (remember that the defect is hidden)! Children born of this “marriage” are legitimate and not illegitimate (Canon 1114); the putative spouses cannot contract a new marriage without having their “marriage” first declared null by the Church (Canon 1069 §2); in certain cases their union can be rendered valid by removing the obstacle that caused the nullity (Canons 1133-1136); the putative marriage can be rendered valid by the Church with a *sanatio in radice*, and by legal

fiction its canonical effects become valid from the beginning, even when it was still null (Canons 1138-1139) [9]. And all this simply by virtue of the colored title of "spouses" possessed by these two people [10].

In the case of the Great Schism, cardinals and other prelates of three obediences (Roman, Avignonese, and Pisan) participated in the conclave that elected Marin V during the Council of Constance, even though all of them were more or less doubtful, and at least those of two of the illegitimate obediences had only a colored title (and not true and real) to be cardinals and therefore able to participate in the election. It should be noted that the elect, although created a cardinal by the Pope of the Roman obedience, had separated himself from it to join that of the Pisan obedience, and had therefore been excommunicated by the "Roman" Pope [11].

And all the examples given above for the putative title also apply to a colored title: the issue was debated before the promulgation (in 1917) of the new Code of Canon Law, but since the Code makes no mention of this distinction and refers only to "invalid title", both types of invalid title (putative and colored) are sufficient for suppliance by the Church.

As we have seen, there are titles that, while not true, legitimize the possession of a right and/or allow the validity of certain acts, even acts of jurisdiction. As the reader may already intuit, these principles have consequences of great importance in the current crisis in the Church. Let's examine them together.

Are we talking about…*jurisdiction today*?

Let's be clear. About today's difficult situation, we are not addressing the jurisdiction required for the internal forum [in practice, for confession; an interested reader can find the answer elsewhere [12]].

We will not speak of the ordinary jurisdiction proper to the external forum [the ordinary power of governance; let us recall, with Tradition and in particular with Pius XII, that bishops enjoy jurisdiction only by receiving it from the Pope, of whom we are, unfortunately, deprived [13]]. Even if one possesses a title, it does not *confer* jurisdiction, but is merely…a title to it. *Having a claim* to something is one thing, *to receive* that which is rightfully ours is another. In this sense, we are not speaking of the Pope's jurisdiction, which can only come to him from Jesus Christ and by virtue of a title that is not essentially vitiated. In Montini and his successors, the absence of the objective and habitual intention to procure the good of the Church, an absence manifested by their actions, reveals to us that there is at least one essential defect in their title to the papacy (we will return to this). The current occupants of the Chair of Peter do not have a true title, and therefore cannot be in possession of the Authority. But does this mean…that they are totally devoid of a title? And are the occupants of the episcopal sees, and the "cardinals" also totally devoid of title? And are their acts without consequences? And can they not benefit from supplied jurisdiction?

We will address these issues separately (Point 1 for the pope; Point 2 for everyone; and Point 3 for the cardinals and bishops only).

Point 1 (a). The situation of the "pope".

How often have we heard: "It disgusts me to think that a Paul VI, or a Bergoglio, could have power in the Church"; "The permanence of the Church cannot depend on heretics, it is impossible". It is an understandable revulsion; considering the heresies, the constant errors, the scandals of these figures, one is easily tempted to say: "These people cannot be anything at all in the Church."

Let's set aside the arguments *ad absurdum* against the hypothesis which sees the occupants of the Apostolic See as an absolute nothing, and therefore not even "popes" *materialiter* - arguments and hypotheses about which *Sodalitium* has already spoken [14]. Let us simply try to analyze the state of things according to natural and ecclesiastical law.

First of all, let us apply to the papacy what we have said up till now regarding titles.

First of all, does it make sense to talk about "titles to the papacy"? Can anyone claim any "rights" to the papacy? I think so. Repeating the definition of title will illuminate the question: title is *the event, distinct from the material fact of delivering the thing, that justifies the taking of possession of it.* Do we find these elements in the process of assuming the papacy? Certainly there is *something* to take *possession* of (in a broad sense, obviously): and it is the Authority, with all that it entails (universal jurisdiction, infallibility, etc.). There is an *event* that justifies this taking of possession: and that is the election by the conclave *along with* the acceptance of the one elected [this acceptance must be upright, that is, internal [15]; and also manifested externally: we are made of body and soul!]. These two elements (the taking of possession, and its justification) are then distinct, as the definition of title requires: the "taking possession" of the papacy occurs with its conferral by Jesus Christ, while the justification (title) of this conferral occurs with the human process carried out first by the electoral body and then by the one elected.

Therefore, a title to the papacy exists [16].

After this premise, it is a question of applying the principles to the facts. We need to distinguish between two slightly different cases: that of a Pope who ceases to be Pope (as could be the case with Paul VI), and that of an elected official who never becomes Pope (which is certainly the case from Albino Luciani to Robert F. Prevost).

In the first case we have a person who has lost possession of the divine Authority; he possessed this communication on the part of Christ but destroyed it through an objective defect in his own acceptance: this person's will *was* to procure the good of the Church, and this was manifested in his acceptance of the election, but *now that will is no longer such* (due to objective modernism, liberalism, progressivism, etc). What remains of this person's papacy? Substantially…nothing: he no longer possesses the Authority, having interrupted the communication, the "being with" Christ (Mt. XXVII, 20) that is the essence of the papacy: he has placed himself in a state of "capital schism" according to the expression of Fr. Guérard des Lauriers [17]; the papacy therefore is not there (*formaliter*). There is no upright and internal consent, as it has been deformed, whether consciously or not [18].

This internal consent is flawed; and it is recognized as such to the extent that it is manifested externally (in a probable way by the *sensus fidei* of the simple faithful, in an evident way by our faith). This will, which is objectively contrary to the good of the Church, while being sufficient to vitiate the title of the elected person and to prevent him from possessing Authority, does not, however, annul the other two elements that constitute title to the papacy, namely the purely external consent, and the election. There is no papacy, but this aspect remains. While in fact this person is not the Pope, yet he *is there*: by virtue of his election (invalid or not), he *appears* to be the elect; by virtue of his external "yes", he *appears* to have accepted the papacy. Whoever says that he has *no* title to be there must demonstrate that this person does not even have an appearance of title: the elements that are, in themselves, capable of constituting true title to the papacy are present, but one is flawed (internal consent) and the others by themselves are not sufficient to constitute it (they are the election and the only external consent). Until an Authority in the Church declares the consent to be deviant and until the "election" is not juridically quashed, whether or not it were invalid, this is the situation: the semblance of title remains. There are elements present that, in a more or less tenuous way, give an appearance (even sedevacantists, in fact, use the terms "impostor", "false pope", "antipope", "usurper" for the "popes" of Vatican II, all expressions that signify a falsehood *clothed* and *colored with deceiving truth*). In other words, all the elements are present to at least meet the definition of a colored title: *a null title, but one that appears valid by virtue of some juridical premise.* Such a personage has *at the very least* a colored title [19] [20]. Certainly, this situation is a monstrosity, the fruit and the cause of the lies whose father we know (John VIII, 44), but…*it is something and not purely nothing*.

It does not matter that the elected one's defection is blatant as a consequence of his actions, and that therefore it is licit and dutiful for us not to follow them, and that consequently, from a certain point of view, the defect of this title is not *hidden*: it doesn't matter, because any colored title, even in the civil sphere, can easily be identified as flawed by one or many *private* individuals; but until *an authority* with the power over this title intervenes, it remains such and exercises the influence foreseen by divine and human law, as the case may be. And in the Church, it is not the role of private individuals, even priests or bishops, to exercise acts that require authoritative power: "*Given that the Church is a wisely constituted society, the physical or moral persons authorized to declare the vacancy of authority are* ***ipso facto*** *juridically capable of carrying out the "provisio"* [provision] *of that authority. Therefore, let those who affirm: 'The See is (totally) vacant', and claim to impose on others the obligation to affirm this under pain of anathema, convene 'a' conclave; then we will stop taking them seriously*" [(21)].

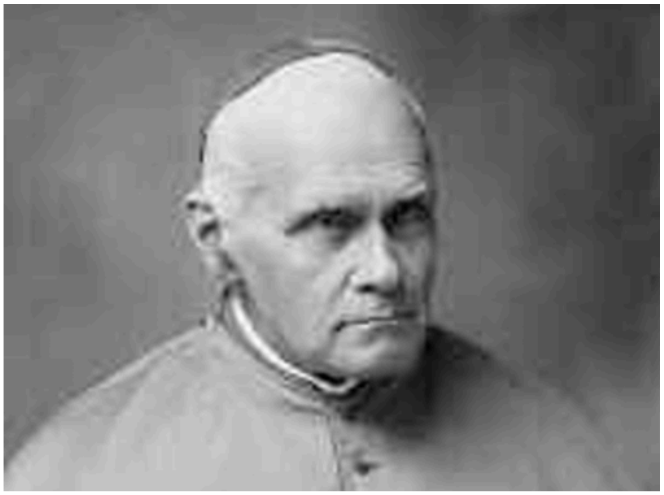
The two facts described in the preceding paragraphs, namely that a certain apparently titled person: 1. does not lose *everything*, and 2. that the healing of such a situation is not in the power of just anyone - were intuited by those theologians who discussed the case of a "manifest (private) heretical Pope", some proposing: 1. The *necessity* for deposition, but 2. *on the part of* an imperfect General Council; while others argued for at least 1. the *necessity* for a monition 2. *from* an authority of the Church [(22)] [(23)].

The reader should note well: I am not saying that by virtue of their "colored" position, such a subject would obtain Authority. No, a false title (which is what a colored title is) is able to obtain the effect of a true title only by the disposition of the legislator. Now, in ecclesiastical law, a colored title can obtain a supply (of jurisdiction) only by the will of the Authority (which in our situation…does not exist or does not concern the present case). And by divine law, considering the nature of the papacy, it is contradictory to think that Christ would supply His own Authority to someone who objectively refuses it (the "*being with*" Christ is correlative; Christ *is with* Peter if Peter *is with* Christ and vice versa). For now, I am simply pointing out that this person is not just a pure "nothing".

Point 1 (b). Situation of the post-conciliar "popes"

What we said in *Point (1a)* applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to those who have succeeded each other as "popes" after the presumed "first in the series". The defect in their title does not consist in their failure of internal consent, but rather in the absence, from the very beginning, of such upright and internal consent: the mere acceptance of Vatican II is a sign of it. For them, too, the other two parts of their title remain: election and external "acceptance".

Therefore, these subjects never had possession of Authority. In today's conditions, some circumstances can multiply the defects of their title [(24)]; but defects are always and in any case juridically hidden (as they have never been authoritatively denounced); and with two elements of title that are always and in all cases present: election [(25)] and apparent, external consent. The declaration of the title's nullity must occur with the juridical (authoritative) denunciation of the defects that afflict it: this holds true for ecclesiastical law, for human law, and for natural law: before any authoritative intervention, the confessor presumed to be legitimate validly hears confessions; the debtor allows the prescription to run on, etc.



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In short, even these individuals: A. Luciani, K. Wojtyla, J. Ratzinger, J. M. Bergoglio, R. F. Prevost, are not mere "nothings" in the Church. They have some title to be there - whether true or colored doesn't matter. Now a title, as we have seen from the beginning of this article, is positioned on the side of the **material cause**, preparing the basis for a legitimate right, for a legitimate possession; and so, precisely for this reason, the "**materialiter-ity**" of these individuals cannot be denied. *Materialiter* describes the ontology of the question, while the "colored title" does so from a canonical point of view.

Canon law contemplates colored title (and therefore *materialiter*)

Let's begin with an explanation of the terminology employed by Fr. Guérard and the law of the Church in this matter. "An ecclesiastical office [OFFICIUM] is a charge [*munus*] instituted in a stable manner either by God or by the Church, which must be conferred in conformity with canonical prescriptions, and which, by its nature, entails a certain participation in ecclesiastical power, whether of order or jurisdiction." "The officium is founded on and measured by the *munus*, as is the relationship, by its foundation." The *officium* is the relationship of the hierarch (he who has jurisdiction in the Church) with Christ and his subjects. This relationship is given by Christ, but it is measured by the *munus*, the charge determined by the Church. In canonical terms, the *munus* is a simple charge; the *officium* is that charge united with a participation in ecclesiastical power.

The possibility of possessing a title without legitimacy (therefore a colored title - and therefore *materialiter*), far from being an invention, is implicitly contemplated by canon law. "This is what Canon 151 demonstrates. It speaks, in fact, of an *officium* that is vacant *de iure* (by law), and yet this *officium* can still be illegitimately possessed. Now, if such an *officium* is vacant 'de iure', this means that the exercise of such ecclesiastical function, as specified by this *officium*, is NULLIFIED; meaning that, even if the aforementioned function corresponding to the said *officium* is materially exercised, the exercise has no effect. Thus, for example, if a pastor of a certain parish contracts a 'civil marriage', the *officium*: 'pastor of such parish', is vacant, this occurs *ipso facto* by the delinquent's tacit renouncement from the moment the felony is 'notoriously' known (Canon 188 n. 5). In such a case, should this priest, who up to that moment was a functioning parish priest, continue to perform the same acts as before, these acts, *insofar as they formally pertain* to the *officium* of a pastor, are null; and the faithful of that parish must take no account of them. This priest, because of the offense he has committed, has rendered himself metaphysically and canonically unfit to PARTICIPATE in ecclesiastical authority as pastor. More precisely, this priest NULLIFIES for himself the OFFICIUM of which he was, until then, invested.

When the *officium* is vacant, the bishop must provide for it. But he must, according to Canon 151: first, declare that this *officium* is still illegitimately possessed [therefore, there is an apparent and juridical titularity that remains, despite the office already being vacant; and declaring it falls to the bishop who has ecclesiastical authority, and not the parishioners or any other person, n.d.a]; second, the bishop must mention this declaration in the 'canonical provision' that installs the new pastor. The Code of Canon Law thus recognizes as a possibility that an *officium* may be 'possessed illegitimately' by a cleric who has nevertheless nullified for himself the OFFICIUM that corresponds to this *officium*. Now, it would evidently be meaningless to claim that there can be possession, even if 'illegitimate', of a thing that in fact no longer exists. It would be meaningless to claim that the cleric who contracts a 'civil marriage' can possess, although illegitimately, the OFFICIUM that he nullifies *ipso facto*. What this cleric still possesses of the *officium* entrusted to him is that which in this *officium* is distinct from the OFFICIUM: it is the MUNUS. Indeed, the canonical provision that had established the delinquent priest as pastor of that parish still remains; it has, in the Church and by

virtue of the Church, an objective effect that does not depend on the particular person from whom it emanates (Canon 183§2). **To annul this canonical provision and the MUNUS which is formally its effect, a canonical 'process' which makes executive a judgment rendered in the Name of Christ himself is necessary.** We see then that the MUNUS and the OFFICIUM can truly be separated, with the former, and it alone without the other, concretely subsisting in the person who 'possesses it illegitimately' " [(26)].

What is a *munus* [charge] that is possessed but illegitimate; that is, a *canonical provision* rendered null, but continuing to exist; without power and yet not declared as such; nor revoked by the authority; what is it, if not a more or less ostensible title, but without reality, and therefore, a colored title? The Code establishes a principle, it follows the nature of ecclesiastical things; it does not apply it to the papacy, but the principle remains, and, as we have seen above, it can and should be applied to the papacy. In the same way, the distinction between the formal point of view and the material point of view is not Fr. Guérard's invention who, however, had the merit of applying it today to the papacy [St. Antoninus had already done so in the past [(27)]].

"*When the Sessio ceases following a crime, between the instant in which the crime is notorious and the instant in which the sentence of the Church has executory force, the munus remains and is possessed ILLEGITIMATELY, but the officium is destroyed.*

[This is the case provided for by Canon 188: the 'renuntiatio tacita' [tacit renunciation] expressly concerns the officium, not the munus. And such is currently the case of Wojtyla: he is deponendus [must be deposed] *because he is burdened by a capital schism that only he can end, and he is* ipso facto *deprived of the officium (he is not the Pope FORMALITER); but he still ILLEGITIMATELY has the MUNUS (he is 'pope' MATERIALITER), until the Church affirms and promulgates that he has constituted himself as depositus]*" [(28)]. "Depositus [deposed] *concerning the exercise of the function,* deponendus [to be deposed] *concerning the qualification, certainly illegitimate yet juridically real, that still remains inherent to the person*" [(29)].

We should note that the *munus-officium* distinction does not introduce the possibility of: on the one hand, a shepherd or Pope who truly is such, but without any power; and on the other hand, a shepherd or Pope who holds their power merely as an adjunct. It is not a distinction between *being* and *power*. No, rather it is the following distinction: on the one hand, the *munus*, which is the bare office received, the *designation*, the *provision*; and on the other, the *officium*, which, alone, is the receiving of the power over the Church, communicated by Christ; this communication is the only one that truly constitutes being a shepherd or a Pope in reality. We will explore this fully later on.

Some objections

Numerous traditionalists have advanced arguments to exclude any claim of title, even a coloured one, to the "conciliar popes"; let's analyze the principle ones.

First objection: The elections of the "conciliar popes" are invalid because…the elected person is not eligible and/or the electors do not have the power of election, as they would be excommunicated (Can. 167 §1 n. 3). Others have studied this question specifically [(30)]. In order to remain within the scope that I have proposed, I limit myself to observing: what Authority has ever **juridically declared or denounced** the excommunications that would vitiate such nominations, proceeding then to the **forfeiting of these apparent titles**…? [(31)]

The same can be said of the hypothesis according to which the elect and the electors would not be eligible because they belong to heretical and schismatic sects, in short, they would be outside the Church; setting aside the fact that no Authority has ever attributed these qualifications to Vatican II, I respond: Has there ever been an **authoritative denunciation** of the membership of these individuals in heretical and schismatic sects, a membership that would vitiate their appointments? Has there ever been an

authoritative and legal nullification of this colored title that exists in fact?

Some people argue that the "popes" of Vatican II are ineligible because of their subjective heresy, following the decree of the Bull of Paul IV. One could give a specific response [32], but to stay on topic I will address the core issue: even if Paul IV's Bull were to apply, this would simply mean that the elected person would not have the aptitude to become the Pope; however he would remain "pope" *materialiter* because of the fact that the election has occurred, and this juridical fact is sufficient to confer a colored title - even if it is impossible for the designated person to become Pope (also) because of the Bull (and not only due to the mere lack of objective intention to procure the good of the Church).

In short, what authority of the Church has declared these ineligibilities? No one, because we are without an Authority. Lacking an authoritative denunciation, even an ineligible one maintains a purely colored title until his election is annulled. The arguments described above all emanate from "totalist" circles, arguments that cannot be invoked unless supported by a denunciation holding ecclesiastical authority, and thus having juridical validity.

In this regard, it is of interest to note what Father Zapelena S.I. wrote about the power that someone outside the Church can have:: ***"That someone who is not a current member of the Church could be a subject of ecclesiastical jurisdiction*** *results* [also] *from two proofs: the first is that even a manifestly heretical priest has jurisdiction to absolve a faithful who is suffering from a terminal illness, something admitted by all theologians; and then from the fact that the separated priests of the Eastern Church* [schismatics] *have, by tacit papal concession, jurisdiction to absolve sinners in the sacrament of penance, and this not only in the extra-ordinary case of serious illness, but in ordinary and daily cases of Christian life* [33]. *It is true that in these cases jurisdiction is being dealt with in the internal forum; but jurisdiction in the internal forum does not differ in kind from jurisdiction in the external forum: and therefore it must be concluded that the intimate nature of jurisdiction does not essentially require that its possessor be someone who is a current member of the Church*" [34]. Along the same lines, we know for certain from canon law that an excommunicated person can exercise jurisdiction (and every heretic is excommunicated). Theologians then commonly admit that a bishop who is secretly a formal heretic does not lose his own jurisdiction [35] [36]. Many claim this also of the Pope, and not only as a "secret heretic" but also as a "private heretical doctor" [37]. **A note to the reader:** I am not saying that a "pope" who teaches heresies, or who objectively does not want the good of the Church, or who was elected in a fraudulent manner, is Pope: I am only pointing out that a heretic and a schismatic, whether secret or manifest, can have a false title that even allows them to have jurisdiction and some power and role in the Church; which is already much more than what we will be interested in saying further on in this article!

Another type of objection maintains the *intrinsic* invalidity of G. B. Montini's election, due to coercion over other electors. Similarly, many who discovered they were sedevacantists only upon the arrival of J. M. Bergoglio maintain his illegitimacy is due to a flaw in the election: whether because of a paradoxical will of J. Ratzinger, or because of cardinal meetings held prior to the conclave (forgetting, however, the meetings held in the home of Umberto Ortolani before the election of their "saint" Paul VI) [38]. As for the election of Bergoglio's successor, some are already saying that the conclave is invalid, either due to the appointment of cardinals, or their number.

To all of them, we repeat: even admitting but not conceding that there is an intrinsic defect in the election, what authority in the Church has denounced the defects of these elections? In the absence of an authoritative denunciation, **even an invalid election, until it is quashed, contributes to the creation of a colored title:** "*The existence of a possible obex* [impediment]*, discovered a posteriori, whether in the 'Conclave' that elects him, or in the person thus chosen, is not sufficient*

to invalidate this person, he is, at least provisionally, 'pope' MATERIALITER. This is because ***an indisputable fact****, BUT WHICH IS NOT OF THE* ***ONTOLOGICAL ORDER****, cannot be immanent to* ***Divine Norms themselves****. Such a fact, therefore, can only have value and FORCE in the Church by virtue of an order and a promulgation made by the authentic Authority of the Church*" [(25)]. The **indisputable fact** is (possibly) the invalidity of the election; however, **Divine Norms** demand the intervention of the Church to sanction this fact; on the other hand a colored title exists by natural right and is therefore an **ontological fact**.

These objections fundamentally miss the mark, because they fail to consider what is necessary: the Church is a society both human and divine, and for this reason in the cases described the intervention of the Authority is required (or a public and explicit admission from the elect, which, given human psychology and even more so the psychology of the modernist, will happen with difficulty). For the same reason, it must always be possible for a Pope to be elected in the ways established by Jesus Christ, by the hand of God but with the cooperation of human means that He himself established once and for all in the apostolic hierarchy. And for the same reason, a "conciliar church" distinct in all respects from the Catholic Church does not juridically exist.

Point 2. What "power" can the acts of the individuals described in Point 1 hold within the Church?

Thus, *materialiter* exists; proven also by natural law, divine law, and ecclesiastical law: it corresponds to a colored title.

What can be said, then, of its effects? Is it possible that a colored title would have effects? If yes, what are they?

In the preceding points, we have seen that until an authority with power in the field intervenes, an invalid title remains nonetheless a title. This means that it exercises influence provided by law.

The "popes" in question are "popes" only in appearance, they are not Popes: however they have a title, at the least, a colored one. They are also clearly convinced of the opposite: they behave as if they are Popes, they teach, they govern (*what* they teach, *and in what direction* they govern, is another matter); naturally without any Authority or jurisdiction; but in "governing"...they make **appointments.** And who are appointed, specifically, as "bishops" and "cardinals"? People in the same condition, who manifestly do not desire the objective good of the Church, and therefore are unfit to govern their portions (dioceses, curia, etc.). In short, a "nomination" flawed in both its terms: in the person designated (as "bishop", "cardinal") who poses a hidden flaw, and in the designator ("pope") who lacks all the ordinary requirements for appointing. And yet…the designator is not a nobody, indeed in some respects he *appears* to be a legitimate designator.

What he poses is a flawed act, but…*it is an act* (not in the sense of a valid, juridical, authoritative act; but it is still a human and public action!). It is a colored act. To be precise, it is colored by the "mere materialiter-ity" of the one who acts. From Montini to Prevost, the elected are not true Popes; their actions, however, are vested with a purely colored titularity; they are not Popes, the acts they perform are empty, and yet…Are these colored acts sufficient to confer at least a colored title to those they designated ("bishop", "cardinal")? Remembering the conditions for which a title is colored, it seems so: a colored title occurs when everything that would confer a title is put into effect, but it is tainted by some substantial and hidden defect, which makes the title invalid. In our case, it *seems* that there is a legitimate designation, but this is not the case: therefore, until they are legally quashed, the "cardinal" and the "bishop" have a colored title to the cardinalate or bishopric [(39)] [(40)].

We will talk about this again in *Point 3*.

But first we ask ourselves: does a colored title allow for the performance of some act that has validity, in the hypothesis that an act posed by the

holder of a "colored title" requires jurisdiction or some real power to have value? [41]

A colored title confers no power, it is not a true title. But above, we have seen how the State and the Church in certain circumstances *supply* the power, in such a way that even a colored title can issue valid acts. What about the case we are interested in, that of the Vatican II "popes"?

We can exclude the efficacy provided for colored titles **by ecclesiastical law.**

Is it possible, then, **for Jesus Christ Himself** to intervene, with the justification of a colored title, to give an effect to some act of the title holder? That Christ could provide jurisdiction is beyond any doubt (ultimately, it is from Him that all jurisdiction originates); that He could do it without the mediation of the Pope, is also beyond doubt regarding His absolute power (it implies no contradiction). But it also seems certain that He can do this with His ordered power (otherwise, ad absurdum, all jurisdiction would disappear with the death of every Pope; and as long as the current crisis endures, there would perhaps be no more sacrament of penance, which requires the confessor's jurisdiction over the penitent). "*The hypothesis of suppliance on the part of Christ is not without foundation, even among the Authors. Billuart, O.P., for example, supposes it in the hypothetical case of the 'heretical pope'. 'It is a common opinion', writes Billluart, 'that Christ, for the common good and the tranquility of the Church, with a special dispensation, grants jurisdiction to the manifestly heretical pope* [heretical as a private doctor]*, as long as he has not been declared as such by the Church' (Summa Sancti Thomæ..., t. IX, Tractatus de fide et regulis fidei, obj. 2°). [Here Billuart supports even the suppliance of Authority of jurisdiction, which cannot be admitted in our case]. Timoteo Zapelena S.I. also hypothesizes a supplied jurisdiction, albeit limited, granted by Christ to ensure the continuity of the Church. Examining the case of the Great Western Schism, after having explained that the legitimate Pope was the Roman one, the Jesuit theologian considers what would have happened if all three 'popes' of the Western Schism were to be 'doubtful', and therefore, 'null'. Would the Cardinals and Bishops designated by them all have been invalid? According to Zapelena, in this hypothetical case, 'one would have to admit a supplied jurisdiction (based on the colorer title), not on the part of the Church, which does not have supreme authority, but on the part of Christ Himself, who would have granted jurisdiction to each of the antipopes as it was necessary', that is, only for the designation of Cardinals (and Bishops) fit for the election of a Pope (op. cit. p. 115). The case analyzed by Zapelena is very similar to our own. If Billuart hypothesized supplied jurisdiction for a manifestly heretical pope, and Zapelena hypothesized it even for an antipope, there is no reason why this supplied jurisdiction would not be theologically possible also for a 'pope' materialiter, - limited, of course, to those acts necessary to ensure the continuity of the hierarchical structure of the Church, which is postulated by faith in the promises of Our Lord*" [42].

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The explanation given by Abbé Lucien *in illo tempore,* can also be traced back to an intervention given by Christ thanks to a colored title: at present, Christ, the principal cause of divine action in the Church, cannot exercise the principal part of his spiritual mission (*missio*) by making use of the hierarchy and the occupants of the seats of authority (*sessio*) because they pose an obstacle to it. However, He can exercise the *missio* by making use of them as regards its secondary purpose: to maintain the existence of His Church as a visible society (*The gates of hell shall not prevail…*). Indeed, the *sessio* is essentially ordered to the *missio*; but from a secondary point of view, the *missio* is for the *sessio* (to perpetuate it) [(43)]. How does this happen? Bishop Guérard, in writing about the co-optation into hierarchy, wrote: The *officium* (in the case in question: the participation in some responsibility in the Church) is received by the hierarch through a Communication exercised by Christ to the hierarch; while the *munus* (the charge, and in our case: the juridical title), the foundation of the aforementioned relationship between the hierarch and Christ, is received by the hierarch through a Communication exercised by Christ but **through the mediation of the Church.** "*The modalities of this causality* [that of the Church towards the hierarch] *are extremely different: be it character conferred with the sacrament of orders, be it canonical provisions…; but ecclesiastical mediation is an essential component of this causality.*

So that from this point of view, the Communication exercised by Christ consists in applying at any moment Church's causality to the operation that is proper to it, in the precise way that Christ established it."

And here one could add a possible intervention in favor of today's "diminished" *operation*, which is a purely material *ecclesiastical mediation*, that is, subsisting in *colored* titles and *colored* actions, **but it is, in fact, still a mediation** - and ***ecclesiastical*** mediation **inasmuch as it is *juridical* (as a colored title;** indeed, "*the MUNUS remains,* ***until the ecclesiastical causality of which it is the effect is annihilated***.") [(44)] The colored title is not nothing. It is a juridical institution founded in natural law. It seems to be sufficient for a jurisdiction suppliance, an intervention by Christ who makes use of a purely juridical ecclesiastical mediation absent of the Authority; this is in conformity with the prerogatives of the colored title and the causality of Christ toward the Church.

Indeed, under certain conditions, with a colored title, the foundations for an intervention by Christ are all there, on His part and on the part of men.

Divinely, Christ always retains in existence things which are necessary for the **good-end** of the Church. It is only by moral necessity (albeit founded in natural law) that, as we have seen above, the Church or the State is moved to supply, only for specific and determined acts, to someone who has only a colored title, who would normally have no right or power. But in the case we are dealing with, the need for Christ's intervention is rather that absolute of the **good-end** of the Church, and necessary for the veracity of Christ's promise, a promise that postulates the perpetuation of the apostolic sees (*The gates of hell shall not prevail…*see note 47).

Juridically, the colored title we have been discussing in the preceding points seem to be both a sufficient legal basis to guarantee an intervention on the part of Christ, and also as an *ultima ratio* [*last resort*] to justify it if necessary.

Point 3. Situation of post-conciliar "bishops" and "cardinals"

Let us now turn to the "bishops" and "cardinals" who accept the Second Vatican Council. Before we return to the current case, that of "bishops" and "cardinals" appointed by *materialiter* "popes" who therefore have no authority, we must make a clarification regarding those prelates initially appointed by a true Authority: they had been appointed and had received jurisdiction - therefore having true title - from a true Pope up to Pius XII (or John XXIII until proven otherwise). Their adherence to the

"capital schism" that began with Vatican II did not invalidate all the rights of these individuals: it made them lose, de facto, responsibility for the Church, as well as the faculty to carry out valid acts in the Church. However it did not remove, for the reasons set out in the preceding paragraphs, an appearance of legitimacy that was never authoritatively denounced, and therefore did not remove a colored title [45]. The solution for their situation is speculatively simple: once the obstacle (adherence to Vatican II) has been removed, they would regain full rights and powers; once their will, objectively contrary to the good of the Church, was removed, the residential bishop or cardinal would regain his full status as such. Currently, the bishops and cardinals who had jurisdiction prior to the Council are all deceased.

What can be said, then, for the "bishops" and "cardinals" appointed by G. B. Montini and up to today? They face the same difficulty that was described for the post-Conciliar "popes" (see note 25): the flaw in the titles of bishoprics and cardinalates is no longer simply one (the flaw in their intention), but there is also a flaw in the person who appoints these "cardinals" and "bishops" (they are not appointed by a Pope). Continuing this parallel and arriving at the acts carried out by these "bishops" and "cardinals", it seems that their value follows that of the acts of the post-Conciliar "popes": their being "bishop" and "cardinal" is a colored title to the power to elect, therefore their acts of election **are at the very least** colored acts, and therefore the titles they claim to confer are "colored" as well, they give the appearance of legitimacy, and therefore allow for the colored, *materialiter* transmission of the occupation of hierarchical sees and the designation of a Pope when circumstances will require it [46]. Moreover, according to what is established in *Point 2,* these acts **can guarantee an intervention** on the part of Christ and therefore the potential for re-establishing order in the Church, if only the obstacle: adherence to Vatican II, were removed.

And this is the minimum that anyone who believes in the apostolicity of the Church must admit: it is necessary that there exist people canonically authorized (at least by a colored title) for a papal election; the Church cannot remain totally deprived of electors of the Pope [47].

Conclusion. What does the existence of colored titles entail?

We have seen how the juridical "color" of offices, and the juridical "color" of the acts and offices of "popes", "cardinals" and potentially the "bishops" of the Council and the Post-Council is a fact confirmed by natural and ecclesiastical law. It corresponds on the canonical side to the ontological *materialiter* explained by Fr. Guérard; it ensures the continuity - only material, but nevertheless necessary - of the apostolic succession with regard to the hierarchy of jurisdiction. And it is adequate for an eventual divine suppliance for certain specific acts.

I hope that with this article *Sodalitium* has made a small contribution to showing, as Fr. Guérard said in essence, that *"the perpetuation of a 'hierarchy' which is only MATERIALITER is not, ex se, impossible*" [48].

Footnotes

1) *Sodalitium* has spoken previously at length about what this situation entails for the faithful of Tradition, especially with regard to *una-cum* https://www.sodalitium.biz/?s=una+cum

2) The interested reader will find an in-depth study and many references on this subject, especially on who this "juridical authority" is, in FRANCESCO RICOSSA, *L'elezione del papa*, in *Sodalitium* n. 55. This article is also available on our website: https://www.sodalitium.biz/lelezione del-papa/

3) Other differences between the supporters of the Cassiciacum Thesis and the totalist sedevacantists are: the reasoning used to demonstrate that Paul VI and his successors do not have Authority; the qualification of bishops consecrated without a Roman mandate; and the origin of jurisdiction. The interested reader will find a simple critique in the text *La situazione attuale della Chiesa e la Tesi di Cassiciacum*, in *Sodalitium* n. 29 pp. 19-34. I remind you that many issues of our magazine are available free of charge at *https://www.sodalitium.biz/sodalitium/* [English: https://www.sodalitiumpianum.com/sodalitium-magazine/]

4) PAUL GIRARD, *Manuel de droit romain*, Paris 1906, p. 304; cited in RAOUL NAZ, *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique,* Letouzey et Ané, Paris 1957; entry *Titre*, tome VII coll. 1275-6.

5) Here we use the term "elected" in the broad sense, which also includes a simple appointment by a superior, without any voting on the part of a college.

That the election is a title is clear from the definition of title itself: *the event, distinct from the material fact of delivering of the thing, which justifies taking possession of it.* By being elected to an office, I have some rights to that office: the right of priority, the right of access, etc.

6) Every canonist talks about it; one particularly clear exposition is given by FELICE CAPPELLO S.I., *Summa Iuris Canonici*, Gregorian University, Rome 1932, tome I, nn. 254-270.

7) Canonical note: as to the jurisdiction supplied by the Church, authors dispute whether it is necessary for the error to be *effectively* widespread, or if the mere existence of a foundation *that, of its own, generally leads to error* is sufficient. Regardless of this discussion, "*as to common error*, *when there is positive and probable doubt, of either law or fact, nothing prevents the full use of canon 209: 'In common error or in positive and probable doubt either of law or fact, the Church supplies jurisdiction in both the external and internal forum'*" (RAOUL NAZ, *op. cit*., entry *Erreur commune*, vol. V col. 444).

8) Since we are mentioning it and will return to it, let us recall the meaning of **supplied jurisdiction,** and above all its purpose (the highlights are mine): "*To supply jurisdiction is to confer, for individual actions, the necessary power to act validly, a power that the superior or acting judge* ***does not have,*** *not by office nor by delegation. Therefore, this power exists neither before the action nor after it, and the superior or the judge are correctly said to have no power (habitually), even if it is not without power that they perform an act. Indeed, where no impediment of natural or divine law opposes it, the Church can supply jurisdiction, and this is so that someone who must act, and seriously doubts his own power, can act securely with the certainty (of the suppliance), or so that the faithful, who are in good faith, are not harmed because of the error or malice of the superior*" (VERMEERSCH-CREUSEN, *Epitome iuris canonici*, Dessain, 6th edition Malines 1937; tome I n. 322).

The principles governing supplied jurisdiction apply to any power; Vermeersch (n. 211) after having proposed an example, he cites the textbook by Cardinal D'Annibale which I consulted: "*Of course, common error supplies for those things which pertain to the state and condition of persons, as far as these are required by law, whether civil or canonical, in order that something can be done validly; and there is no need for a colored title: as in someone who is publicly held to be a citizen…a father of a family…a wife…a clergyman…a son*" (GIUSEPPE D'ANNIBALE, *Summula theologiæ moralis*, Tipografia San Giuseppe, 2nd edition, Milan 1881; p. I n. 79 note 75).

9) A similar and more ordinary case is that of a Pope who provides supplied jurisdiction for dispensations and absolutions granted by someone who at the time did not really have the power or the jurisdiction, but *seemed* to have them (that is, he had a colored title; some historical examples: Clement XI on 3/12/1721 for the acts that the Patriarch of the Maronites had carried out *after* he had been deposed, in *Iuris pontificii de Propaganda Fide*, Poliglotta di P. Fide, Rome 1889, p.1 vol. II p. 344; Benedict XIV on

Pope Clement XI

7/20/1846 for the acts that Maronite bishops had carried out *after* being under censure, *ibid*. vol. III p. 289).

10) *Sodalitium* has already spoken on this marriage case in https://www.sodalitium.biz/risposta-gia-data/

11) Cardinal Franzelin notes: "*It is on this provision of law, that is, the colored title, that numerous decrees promulgated at the time of this schism are based, especially that of Alexander V at the pseudo-Council of Pisa: 'By certain knowledge and with the approval of this sacred Council, we ratify and approve all dispensations made by the bishops in the neutral parts (who had not adhered to any pontificate)... and all absolutions and habilitations in the penitential forum* [and collations, provisions, translations in the external forum] *given during the schism both by the contenders (Gregory XII and Pedro de Luna) and by the aforementioned Ordinaries' (Harduin. T. VIII p. 22)*" (JOHANN BAPTIST FRANZELIN, *De Ecclesia Christi, Poliglotta di P. Fide* 1887; thesis 13, at point 5, note 1 of *Scholion*).

12) We refer the reader to M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Intervista…* in *Sodalitium* n. 13. This famous interview was included in the collection *Il problema dell'Autorità e dell'episcopato nella Chiesa* [*The problem of Authority and of the Episcopate in the Church*], published by Centro Librario Sodalitium: https://www.sodalitiumshop.it/prodotto/il-problema-dellautorita-e-dellepiscopato-nella-chiesa/

And also available on our website: https://www.sodalitium.biz/intervista-a-mons-guerard-des-lauriers-o-p-sulla-tesi-di-cassiciacum/ [English: https://www.sodalitiumpianum.com/interview-bishop-guerard/]

One can also see M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Déclaration...* in *Missio et Sessio*, a supplement to *Sous la bannière*, n. 7 of Sept-Oct. 1986. ANTHONY CEKADA, *Traditional priests, Legitimate Sacraments* (2003) (http://www.traditionalmass.org/images/articles/TradPriestLeg.pdf).

Is there a need for a title even in these cases? The general principle is that in the Church, all jurisdiction is founded on a title. According to some of the authors cited, the jurisdiction for confessions in the current situation is supplied directly by Christ. This does not preclude the confessor from having a true title, given radically in priestly ordination and actualized by the need of souls (a need that would otherwise be unsatisfiable). If there were no need for any title, the door would be opened to any (arbitrary) mediation on

the part of Christ, as can be seen in the phenomenon of conclavism. We wrote about it in *Seconda parte: commento di Sodalitium*, in *Sodalitium* n. 52 (special edition on the "canonical commission" of the SSPX) pp. 26-27. On this question, Father Ricossa has also recently spoken responding to a priest of the Society of Saint Pius X https://www.sodalitium.biz/un-livornese-a-nantes medice-cura-teipsum/ .

13) *Sodalitium* has already written on the provenance of this jurisdiction, for example in *L'Autorità del Vescovo: viene tramite il Papa o i fe deli?* [*The Authority of the Bishop: does it come through the Pope or the Faithful?*] in n. 27; and more broadly in n. 52 pp. 36-41.

14) *La situazione attuale della Chiesa e la Tesi di Cassiciacum* [*The Current Situation in the Church and the Thesis of Cassiciacum*] in *Sodalitium* n. 29 pp. 19-34. Footnote n. 7, by the editorial staff of *Sodalitium*, to the second part of *Il papato materiale* [*The Material Papacy*] by the then FATHER DONALD SANBORN (in *Sodalitium* n. 48 pp. 35 36; the work was published by the CLS https://www.sodalitiumshop.it/prodotto/il-papato-materiale-de-papatu-materiali/).

And then the article cited in footnote 2 of the present article.

15) Let us clarify what "internal acceptance" means. There is a side of acceptance that is external: it is a "Yes" pronounced externally. Internal acceptance, on the other hand, is rightly consenting to exactly what one should consent to. Now, it can happen that, even in good faith, this internal acceptance is not correct, meaning it doesn't concern what is required to be accepted, but rather something else entirely. In that case, and if the subject, either in ignorance or in bad faith, pronounces a "Yes", it is a purely external acceptance.

16) In the first volume of his *De Ecclesia*, thesis 29, Cardinal Billot also thinks that election to the papacy is a title: "*The legitimate election as bishop of Rome being the title to the succession of Peter in the primacy over the whole Church, etc.*"

More generally: "*Once the designation has been completed, the elected person acquires the* ius ad rem *(to the office they are elected to), which becomes* ius in re *by the acceptance by the elected person*" (MATTEO CONTE A CORONATA, *Institutiones iuris canonici*, Marietti, Turin 1928; vol. 1, no. 222). This is a point shared by all Catholic authors (for reference, see NAZ, *op. cit.*, entry on *Élection*, vol. V coll. 237, 245).

However, other authors together with the Code of Canon Law (Can. 109) call the election more broadly the "condition" of the appointment (Franzelin, Cappello); and distinguish it from the granting of the title and from the introduction into possession (WERNZ-VIDAL, *Ius canonicum*, Gregorian University, Rome, 1937; t. III n. 523). This suggests that the election is not the sole constitutive element of the title. Election alone does not confer *ius in re* (the right to act on the thing which one already has in possession), this is a settled matter. For example, the simple fact of being named an heir does not make one the possessor, so the simple fact of being the elected person does not make one invested with authority. In fact, it is commonly said that election confers *ius ad rem* (the right to act, not on the thing, but on its current possessor, postulating an introduction into possession). For example the fact of being named an heir provides the faculty to assert rights with the executor of the will (but not yet to dispose of the inheritance). Likewise, the fact of being the elect confers rights towards the person who must confer the office/authority/property (but yet it does not confer the right to *have* this office/authority/property *available*). Therefore, depending on the case, it is the acceptance of the elect and/or the confirmation of the superior that confers the *ius in re*: because for the named heir to be able to dispose of the inheritance, acceptance of the inheritance and the necessary actions of the executor are required; similarly, for the elect to take possession of the goods to which the election has assigned him, acceptance by the elect and the conferral of said property by the superior are required.

I believe these two actions, acceptance and confirmation, should be separated, and that consequently the right (the title) conferred by the election alone is accordingly diminished. Certainly, a superior's confirmation is often unnecessary; and frequently, acceptance occurs immediately after the election, is implicit, or isn't even contemplated. But ontology and chronology should not be confused. After an election alone, the elect has a certain right *(ius ad rem*), but one that is remote from that which he will have after accepting. Acceptance doesn't necessarily coincide with the taking of possession. In several cases, including the one that concerns us, the taking of possession (or introduction into possession) occurs and can only occur with an action (communication) on the part of a superior, while acceptance does nothing but bring the matter (the elected person) to its ultimate disposition, and is situated on the side of the material cause alone - therefore concerning title, not possession.

In the case of the papacy, the "good to be taken possession of" (I call it such in the broad sense) is the communication of Authority from God: the simple elect has for himself a very tenuous "title" compared to what he will have after accepting (hypothetically, before an elected person accepts his own election, those electing him can still annul it). By the very nature of its institution, God is "bound" to very little with respect to a person who is simply elected, compared to how much He is "bound" to an elect who has accepted the election without putting an obstacle in the way of it. Both rights, that of the simple elect and that of the elect who has accepted, are *ius ad rem*, but they are almost of two different species. The simple elect has a sort of title, but not directly to the papacy. It is true that the simple elect is already "pope" *materialiter*, but the elect who has accepted is ontologically closer to becoming one *formaliter* (indeed, as soon as an elect sincerely accepts the papacy, Jesus Christ immediately introduces him into "possession" of it, that is, immediately communicates His Authority to him).

Now, if we re-read the definition of title, we realize that every title confers *ius ad rem*. In fact, title is "*the event, distinct from the material fact of delivering the thing, that makes the taking of possession justified*." If in the case of an election, one arrives at the properly so-called *ius ad rem* only with acceptance, we must include in the title also acceptance on the part of the elected person.

And therefore, prior to acceptance, everything that properly constitutes title is not yet there; if there is a defect in the acceptance, the title is colored; if there is

a defect in the election, the title is similarly colored, although more radically.

17) Capital schism consists in the fact that "*the 'authority' finds itself objectively to be in a state of schism: 'essential' schism with regard to the nature of the schism; 'capital' schism because it is that of 'authority'; a state of schism because it lasts, since the 'authority' has not remedied it.*" (*Cahiers de Cassiciacum* n. 3-4 ch. III; further explanations are present in the same work, and in the *Interview* indicated in Footnote 12).

18) This is what the Thesis of Cassiciacum of Fr. Guérard des Lauriers explains, and regarding it the reader will find abundant material in past issues of *Sodalitium*. One can see the correlations presented in https://www.sodalitium.biz/category/tesi-di-cassiciacum/ , or the references summarized in Issue 70-71 pp. 144-146 https://www.sodalitium.biz/la-spiegazione-tomista-dello-stato-attuale-dellautorita-nella-chiesa/

19) And with this, we would like to "reappropriate" Monsignor Benigni, who, in my opinion, was quoted inappropriately by a confrere…

"*Between the death of the Pope and the election of his successor (sede vacante), the Cardinal Camerlengo is the head of the Sacred College*" (UMBERTO BENIGNI in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Appleton Company, New York 1908; vol. 3, entry on *Camerlengo*, p. 217). Our confrere believed this to be a definition of "sede vacante," and invoked it against the *materialiter-formaliter* distinction; to which we respond: "*An office is said to be vacant if it lacks a* ***titleholder*** *or a possessor. Canon 183 § 1 lists the cases of vacancy: death, resignation, removal, dismissal, transfer, expiration of a time established by the act of provision. The diversity of these causes allows us to distinguish different types of vacancy: an office can be vacante plene, that is, de jure and de facto, and this occurs when there is no holder or current possessor following death. It can be vacant "minus plene," or de jure tantum not de facto, when there is no legitimate titleholder but it is entrusted to a current possessor without title; finally, it can be vacant improprie, that is, in fact but not in law, when there is a holder in good standing who does not have possession, either because he has lost it or has not yet been able to take said possession"* (R. NAZ, *op. cit.*, entry *Offices ecclesiastiques*, t. VI col. 1086). All canonists agree on this: the "vacancy" of an office is an analogical term; Msgr. Benigni, writing an article on the Camerlengo of the Sacred College, and not a canonical treatise on the papacy, speaks of sede vacante "plene," and not "minus plene".

20) I say that he has "at the very least" a colored title because this is necessary to safeguard the material apostolicity of the Church. In the power of orders, the Apostles have successors thanks to valid episcopal consecrations and priestly ordinations. In the power of jurisdiction, the successors are titular.

Bishop Guérard des Lauriers also spoke in these terms [the highlights are mine]: "*There is no reason not to disobey the 'orders' ostensibly brought forth by Mons. Wojtyla as if he supposedly were Pope; since he is not the Vicar of Jesus Christ; all the orders brought about by this* ***pseudo-title*** *are IN VAIN, NULL, without any bearing on reality. THERE IS NO NEED to*

Father Giovanni Chelodi, Consultant to the Sacra Rota (Cavalese 1882 - Trento 1922)

disobey, but rather one must IGNORE." (*Interview*… p. 18).

21) By M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Consacrare dei Vescovi*? [*To Consecrate Bishops?*] in *Sodalitium* n. 16 p. 20 (this article is also presented in the volume indicated in Footnote 12.)

On this dual aspect of ecclesiastical hierarchy, the same author explains: "*Just as Christ, 'to whom all judgment is entrusted' (John V, 22-27), is seated on His Throne of Glory, so the Twelve must participate in this Sessio and in this Judgment (Matthew 19, 28). We call this aspect of the Church and its hierarchy the SESSIO, an aspect permanently realized in the universe of Glory, for the Church triumphant, but inherent in the very nature of the Church, and consequently belonging to the Church militant. The Sessio of the Twelve and their successors therefore manifests that of Christ, from whom it proceeds; in the same way in which their Missio, manifests and brings to completion that of Christ. But, unlike the Missio, the Sessio IS NOT COMMUNICATED TO ALL THE SAME WAY. ORIGINALLY it is communicated in the mediation of Peter who receives it fully; whereas it is possessed PERSONALLY and IMMEDIATELY by each of the Apostles and their successors after reception, since 'Bishops are established over their flock by the Holy Spirit' (Acts XX, 28). This is why it is impossible to 'dismiss' a Bishop or even a Parish Priest…or a Pope. To declare the vacancy of an illegitimately occupied munus* [the bare office; we will speak about it later, ed.]*, a canonical process is necessary in which the judge, through the mediation of the Church, is ultimately Christ Himself*" (M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Réflexions brèves concernant la situation actuelle de l'Église militante*, unpublished typescript, circa 1985).

22) A summary of the various positions can be found in BERNARD LUCIEN, *La situation actuelle de l'Autorité dans l'Église*, Documents de catholicité, Brussels 1985; ch. VI *L'argument du pape hérétique: première difficulté.*

23) It is the same principle followed by Canon Law for the provision of offices. **"*A vacant office is*** *one that lacks either a holder* ***or*** *a possessor. If it lacks both, it is said to be* ***fully*** *vacant, that is* ***by law and de facto;*** *if it lacks only a titleholder* [of a true title, ed.]*, whereas someone maintains possession with a colored title, it is said to be vacant* ***by law only*** *and not de facto; if it lacks a titleholder because the person entitled to it has not yet obtained possession or has*

been deprived of it, it is said to be vacant ***de facto only*** *and not by law. (...)*

Having said this (...) the provision of an office that is not vacant ***de facto*** [that is, having a titleholder - even if only a colored one, and this is the second case mentioned above, n.d.a] *is possible, but a certain way of proceeding is necessary. In fact, a case must be instituted against the possessor, either by the one requesting the office or by the promoter of justice (Can. 1696 § 2), and only after it is defined according to the norm of law (Can. 1693-1700) and the possession is declared illegitimate, can such an office be conferred, with the letters of conferral making mention of the judicial declaration (Can 262, 1447)"* (GIOVANNI CHELODI, *Ius de personis*, n. 135; Libreria editrice Tridentum, Trent 1926. The highlights are the author's.) This is the principle established by Canon 151.

Naturally, we must distinguish between one possessor and another: not every possessor is legitimate, and not every possessor can licitly or validly perform the duties of the charge he possesses or "occupies".

The Canons cited do not directly refer to the papacy; however they demonstrate to us the *mens* [mind] of the Church and the principles of law regarding such or similar cases.

24) The possible invalidity of Holy Orders does not fall within these circumstances: certainly if the crisis situation persists and the purely material succession is prolonged, and a liturgical reform undermines the validity of Holy Orders, then "*since the new rite is doubtful, the 'occupants' (of the Apostolic See) will soon be nothing more than supernumeraries*" (M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Interview*... p. 20) inasmuch as there is the possibility that they are not even bishops, priests, or clerics. But this doesn't impede for such "supernumerary" to be a titleholder. In normal conditions, a layman can have a true title to the papacy, and be elected Pope or bishop, and with regard to jurisdiction he can even become so (Pius XII, Constitution *Vacantis Apostolicæ Sedis*).

25) Another question afflicts the post-Vatican II conclaves: their validity. Father Guérard responded: *"Even if we admit as being possible, and it seems probable to us, save for better judgment, that the conclaves of August 24 and October 14, 1978, were valid, despite the arbitrary exclusion of the octogenarian cardinals, a difficulty remains. In fact, the cardinals who elected Cardinal Luciani and Cardinal Wojtyla were, for the most part, appointed by Cardinal Montini. Now, as we explain in this study, if Cardinal Montini was truly pope in the sense that, during his lifetime, the Apostolic See could have no other occupant, he was only the pope 'materially'. For, lacking the real and effective intention of promoting the divine Good that Christ entrusted to the Church, Cardinal Montini was not a pope. Montini did not receive the communication of 'being with', promised directly by Christ (Mt. XXVIII, 20), and was not Pope 'formally'.*

Under these conditions, the acts established by Paul VI are, ***per se****, invalid. 'Per se', meaning without a supplied jurisdiction dispensed by God for the divine Good that He has entrusted to the Church.*

Does such suppliance exist? (...) The validity of a conclave clearly comes from canonical power.

In all these cases, it is not impossible that a certain doubtful or even presumed-invalid act of 'authority' may have, ***de facto,*** *the full effect that it is meant to have by nature, by virtue of a divinely granted suppliance.*

What happened at the conclaves of August 24 and October 14, 1978? (...) If John Paul II adheres to Vatican II ***as a Council*** *instead of declaring it 'heretical', it is not impossible that he is pope only* ***materialiter,*** *similar to the catechumen who commits a mortal sin at the moment of baptism. This presupposes that, in order to preserve the uninterrupted succession in the Church that is considered to be 'apostolicity', God 'supplied' in favor of two conclaves that were, in themselves, invalid.*

But it could equally be said that John Paul II is pope ***formaliter.*** *The sign of it would be if he disqualified Vatican II* ***as a Council****, and if he clearly abrogated the apparent promulgation of the so-called New Mass. From this perspective, the question of 'Paul VI' was and remains certainly different from the question of 'John Paul II'.*

But this second question exists because it is a consequence of the first. Just as it is impossible to believe with certainty that a proposition is true ***because*** *Vatican II affirmed it, even though Vatican II did recall many truths, so it is impossible to believe with certainty that John Paul II is Pope because he is the legitimate elect of a Conclave burdened by the same mortgage that weighs on Vatican II. One might ask whether God 'supplies'. One might consider it impossible that He wouldn't, or that it would not be in conformity with His wisdom that He would do it in favor of a pope who would only be so* ***materialiter****... One would want to be freed from the question, but it cannot be avoided that there is a 'yes and no' at the same time."* (*Le Siège Apostolique est-il vacant?* in *Cahiers de Cassiciacum* n. 1, Association Saint-Hermenegild, Nice 1979). Further on in this article I will attempt to give a response to this question. Bishop Sanborn had done so in the work cited in footnote 14.

26) M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Réflexions brèves*…

27) FRANCESCO RICOSSA, *Papa, Papato e Sede vacante, in un testo di Sant'Antonino e nel pensiero di Padre Guérard des Lauriers,* in *Sodalitium* n. 67.

28) M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Réflexions brèves*... [The highlights are mine].

29) M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Depositus? Deponendus?*, in the introduction.

30) For example BERNARD LUCIEN, *op. cit.,* Ch. VIII *L'argument du Pape hérétique : une solution canonique?* (pp. 85-92).

31) "*For a sentence of excommunication to have the effect of excluding from suffrage, it must be valid; as an invalid sentence cannot produce any juridical effect. The sentence must also be carried out according to the norm of law, generally in a court, but even if it involves a certain delict, there must still be an extrajudicial precept (Canons 1933§4 and 1576§1 n. 1). For an excommunicated person to be excluded from active election, he must be* certainly *excommunicated. The sentence excluding the excommunicated person from the right of suffrage is generally left to the discretion of the Superior, but the Superior can be forced to issue such a sentence if an interested party or*

the common good requires it. Since the Code requires a sentence*, if someone were to incur a censure* ad modum præcepti particularis*, given that in such a case there is no sentence, the censured person is not absolutely excluded from suffrage"* (CONTE A CORONATA, *op. cit.*, n. 231).

In the Church, therefore, to be excluded from suffrage in ordinary elections, a sentence is necessary; regardless of the fact that papal election is not regulated by common law; and regardless of what, for papal elections, has been in force in Canon law since Clement VI (Constitution *Ne romani* of 12/6/1311) and ultimately confirmed by Pius XII (Apostolic Constitution *Vacantis Apostolicæ Sedis* of 12/8/1945, at n. 34): by reason of the Conclave and only by reason of it, both with regard to active and passive election, excommunications, suspensions and interdicts that weigh on cardinals are suspended.

32) Like the answer that had already been given by Fr. Guérard: "*If the 'pope' abjures his error, it is up to the Conclave to 'decide' the alternative: either this repentant 'pope' returns to being Pope formaliter;* ***or, in accordance with the Bull of Paul IV, this 'pope' has alienated himself from the ability to become Pope formaliter, ability which had been conferred on him BEFORE THE CHURCH, by being regularly elected by a valid Conclave.*** *The Church never judges the Pope. But it is up to the Church [a Conclave convened by the hierarchical body of residential bishops who fully profess the Catholic Faith]* ***to decide whether, YES or NO, there exists in the repentant 'pope' a 'canonical revival' of the aptitude to be Pope****. Thus the Church judges in the 'pope' only what, in the latter, formally pertains to the Church*" (Fr. Guérard in *Sodalitium* n. 13 p. 30 [the highlights are mine]). It is the same doctrine of Cardinal Girolamo Albani (see *Sodalitium* n. 56 pp. 24 and 42 nota 69).

As the Mater Boni Consilii Institute, we believe that Paul IV's bull *Cum ex apostolatus* is excluded from the question: "*Regarding 'Cum ex apostolatus', Elena Bonora speaks of a 'legislative measure characterized by the ambiguity of its interpretations and the breadth and gravity of its implications,' which found a precedent in Julius II's bull 'Cum tam divinis' of February 16, 1513, on the nullity of simoniacal elections. But 'who was the one responsible for assuming such a role,' that is, for establishing whether someone had been a heretic or suspected of heresy? 'The General Council? The College of Cardinals?' (certainly not private individuals!). Excluding these entities, only the Tribunal of the Holy Office remained, as was indeed the case in the Morone trial. The legal criterion for excluding him from active and passive voice in the conclave was precisely the ongoing trial by the Inquisition. And this is what the Bull of St. Pius V effectively reconfirmed, which once again entrusted all questions of faith to the Inquisition*" (from *The Bull* "*Cum ex apostolatus officio*" *of Pope Paul IV. Historical Notes*, in *Sodalitium* n. 70-71 p. 29; I also refer to the articles *Un documento attuale di papa Paolo IV sulla giurisdizione degli eretici: la Costituzione Apostolica "Cum ex Apostolatus"* [*A current document of Pope Paul IV on the jurisdiction of heretics: the Apostolic Constitution "Cum ex Apostolatus"*], in *Sodalitium* n. 14; "*'L'eresia ai vertici della Chiesa' (M. FIRPO)… l'incredibile storia del cardinal Morone* [*Heresy at the Summit of the Church, in the 16th century; the incredible story of Cardinal Morone*], in *Sodalitium* n. 36; *Risposta al numero speciale de "La Tradizione cattolica" sul sedevacantismo* [*Response to the special issue of "La Tradizione cattolica" on sedevacantism*], in *Sodalitium* n. 56 on pp. 27-29). What Tribunal or authority has condemned the post-Vatican II "popes" and "bishops"? Or has declared their election, which actually took place, as null?

Getting into the specifics of the topic of heresy, one might observe: given but not granted that a heretic can't even become elected (not the legitimate possessor, only the elected!) nor an elector, one must not confuse *material* heresy with *formal* heresy, nor *publicity* with *notoriety*. A material heretic can still be a member of the Church, and a public heretic can nonetheless be only a material heretic. Furthermore, a formal heretic can only be so publicly and not notoriously (and therefore without juridical value; these are basic notions that anyone who has studied Canon law and theology knows).

Until all the juridical requirements for exclusion from the Church are fulfilled, a person can still be a titleholder, even if only a colored one.

33) If things were truly the same as suggested in this opinion reported by Fr. Zapelena, this would occur solely through the goodness of Holy Mother Church, and not because the schismatics are in a regular situation or have a right to it! And naturally, this does not authorize the Catholic faithful to turn to a minister separated from the Church for the sacraments; on this subject, see the article: *Il nuovo codice di diritto canonico, l'amministrazione dei sacramenti e l'ecumenismo* [*The New Code of Canon Law, the Administration of the Sacraments and Ecumenism*], in *Sodalitium* n. 57.

34) TIMOTEO ZAPELENA S.I., *De Ecclesia Christi*, Pontifical University Gregoriana, Rome 1954, p. apologetic-dogmatic pp. 390-391. These two arguments are valid only if jurisdiction were truly required in these two cases; I intend to discuss them in a future article if necessary.

35) Here is the translation of Canon 2264 of the Pius-Benedictine Code: "*Acts of jurisdiction, whether for the external forum or the internal forum, placed by one excommunicated are illicit; and if a condemnatory or declaratory sentence has been laid down, they are also invalid with due regard for the prescription of Canon 2261 § 3; otherwise, they are valid and, indeed, are even licit if they are sought by a member of the faithful according to the norm of the mentioned Canon 2261 § 2.*"

Some of the authors who discuss the issue of the secret heretical bishop who does not lose his jurisdiction are Cardinal Cajetan, *De auctoritate Papæ et Concilii*, tr. 1 chap. 19. Cardinal LOUIS BILLOT, *Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi*, Giachetti, figlio & soci, Prato 1909; vol. 1 th. 29§2. Father TIMOTEO ZAPELENA, *op. cit.,* p. apol.-dogm., pp. 390-391.

36) A separate question: by virtue of what title do the subjects in the cited cases obtain jurisdiction (if it is effectively a supplied jurisdiction)? For the manifest heretic priest in danger of death, it seems to be a true title because it is explicitly granted by the Church. For schismatic priests, it is either a putative title by reason of common error, or a true title but tacitly granted (as Zapelena says). For the secret

Father Guérard des Laurier with some of the members of the Istituto at Orio Canavese in 1987

heretical bishop it is not easy to say; there are reasons for all three types of title.

37) "*The Pope (...) is constituted a member of the Church by personal faith, which he can lose, and head of the Church by jurisdiction and power which is compossible with heresy*" (RENÉ BILLUART, *De Incarn*., diss. IX art. 2). So too Cajetan, John of St. Thomas (and Fr. Guérard des Lauriers). Moreover, as we have seen, the Code of Canon Law itself provides for the possibility of jurisdiction for someone who is not a member of the Church; if the Church has affirmed this, it means that the fact does not imply a contradiction.

38) Not to mention the fact that, for these latest "neo-sedevacantists", the modernism of Francis is indigestible, while that of Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI - equal in substance and principles - would be "catholicism"... No, in each of the "pontificates" following Vatican II, one finds a lack of objective and habitual intention to procure the true good of the Church. And this is due to repeated acts contrary to the confirmation in faith and morals, as well as to the mere acceptance of Vatican II. The sincerely interested reader need only look through, for example, the installments of the column *L'Osservatore Romano* in *Sodalitium*.

39) It matters little that there are two defects and not just one, as was the case with the "pope", and that one of these defects is even in the person who in some way seems to grant the title: the defect in the recipient is not the only defect that allows for the existence of a colored title. For example, a simoniacal act is deprived of any force (Canon 729), and an act extorted by violence is invalid (Canon (103§1). In these cases a defect exists on the part of the conferor as well (the simoniac or a victim of extortion), and yet even for these acts, the authors foresee the possibility of a colored title.

If one were not convinced, I could at least concede that according to the classification of some canonists, this title would not be colored, but would still be putative (for example P. CONTE CORONATA writes: "*Title is putative [...] for example, if the title for ecclesiastical jurisdiction was conferred by a civil prince, or by a superior who was himself incompetent*" (*op. cit*., n. 291). But P. Vermeersch, for example, says that yes, a defect in the conferor can also give rise to a colored title: "*Title is the action on which the right is founded; it is called colored if it has only the color, that is, the appearance of truth, because either the conferor or the recipient, or the act of conferring itself, suffers from a hidden defect, for example if a delegator were bound by a hidden excommunication or a hidden suspension*" (*op. cit*., n. 322.4). The effect of an act with a defect in the conferor is, therefore, a disputed one. Personally I am inclined towards the presence of a colored title and not merely a putative one.

40) Someone might object: while it is true that a colored title is enough to obtain possession of a thing, this is only in cases provided for by law and, in the examples cited, with supplied jurisdiction on the part of the Church; which is not possible in the case of supreme jurisdiction for the reasons already stated (see above, the paragraph *Are we talking about…jurisdiction today?*), and therefore these "holders of colored titles" cannot make valid nominations. To which I respond: I am not saying that these individuals perform valid acts of Authority; I am not saying that a legal fiction is being implemented; I am simply saying that, at the very least, a colored title that remains as such and does not lead to the transfer of possession is sufficient to color another act.

Likewise, I am not saying that these individuals possess the power to create cardinals and legitimately appoint bishops: their appointments are merely colored, not true (see again the difference between the different types of titles explained at the beginning of this article). The effects that follow their acts are not authentic legitimate actions proceeding from an authentic and legitimate power: they are the effects that can (must) follow a purely colored title. Bishop Guérard said so at the time, and the Mater Boni Consilii Institute supports it: "*Wojtyla's 'sessio' and 'missio' are NOT the 'Sessio' and 'Missio' of the Church founded by Jesus Christ*" (FR. GUÉRARD, *Consacrare dei vescovi?* [*To consecrate bishops?*], see the reference in footnote 21). Anyone who accuses the supporters of the Cassiciacum thesis of being *una cum*, and of recognizing the authority of Vatican II, demonstrates that they know neither the positions nor likely not even the arguments put forward for forty years or more.

41) It is a hypothesis that could be realized both for the current actions of a "holder of a colored title" as well as in the case of a holder of a colored title who emerges from capital schism and thus recovers his responsibility towards the Church. The analysis of this hypothesis falls outside the scope of this article; but it is a question that, as we will see, is resolved "at its source" by a colored title.

Furthermore, it seems to me that the colored title can be used alongside the explanation of elective authority being distinct from the power of jurisdiction, as proposed earlier by Bishop Sanborn in his work cited in footnote 14.

42) *Sodalitium* n. 48 pp. 35-36 footnote 7.

43) BERNARD LUCIEN, *op. cit.*, in Ch. X *Permanence matérielle de la hiérarchie* (pp. 97-103 especially p. 100).

That Divinely supplied jurisdiction for this power was the hypothesis of Fr. Guérard des Lauriers

seems confirmed by what he wrote in the first issue of the Cahiers de Cassiciacum (see footnote 25).

44) M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Réflexions brèves…* [The highlights are mine].

45) This explains to the reader the variability in the way *Sodalitium* has been written over the years: a representative of the modernist group can sometimes be described as *cardinal* or *bishop* **because he has** a *colored title;* or as "cardinal" or "*bishop*" **because he does not** have a true title. This is what Fr. Guérard already had been doing, writing *pope*, but with a lower case p, or "*pope*" with quotation marks to signify the *materiality* of Montini and Wojtyla.

46) Earlier in the text I mentioned that the defect of consent is what constitutes the *essential* defect in the lack of Authority, while any defect in election is a secondary defect. If I call only the internal defect the "essential obstacle", and not the one originating from outside, this is not by whim, but rather to follow what seems to me to be, if not the doctrine, at least the *mens* and the intuition of the Church, which is always assisted by the Holy Ghost in matters pertaining to its own purpose. Here are some examples I came across while browsing just a few of the decrees of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith signed by the Pope. I chose this category because in mission territories, given the distance from Rome and many precarious circumstances, it is easier to incur some difficulty or irregularity in ecclesiastical procedures. The highlights are mine. These quotations show, in addition to the fact that the external defect of a title is secondary, the simple fact that the colored title is sufficient for the Authority to confer validity and jurisdiction in the Church, and they corroborate all the doctrine set forth so far in this article.

A colored title "possessed" by an act is sufficient for a total *sanatio* of external defects. To some Augustinian friars who rebelled against the election of superiors within the Order, Blessed Innocent XI, after commanding them to submit, said of these elections "*that we, by certain knowledge and by the fullness of apostolic authority, wish that* ***all and every defect, even substantial, of law and fact, that may have existed in such elections and confirmations,*** *be considered remedied; that they be held as having been legitimately and canonically carried out*" (Constitution *Exponi nobis* of 03/241678, in *Iuris pontificii de Propaganda Fide*, Poliglotta di Propaganda Fide, Rome 1889; pars 1 vol. II p. 13). Some analogous decisions concerning the election of Eastern bishops can be found in *ibid*. vol. IV pp. 420, 422; vol. V p. 151; or regarding the election of religious superiors, vol. IV p. 518. In all these cases, in spite of substantial defects that made it only a "colored" election - that is, only legitimate in appearance - the Pope healed it from the beginning.

Clement XI wrote to Fr. Claude de Videlou S.J. (who opposed his own nomination as Bishop and Apostolic Vicar of Quei-Cheu by General Visitor Tournon on the basis of his vow not to receive dignities from outside the Company except by obedience) ordered that, notwithstanding the vow and the oath, the appointment and the injunction of consecration "*shall be valid and have full force* ***from the beginning,*** *and shall support you in everything; therefore, we dispense you as if you had never made or taken the said vow and oath. [...] We supply and heal all that has been said to have occurred,* ***or can be considered or claimed to have occurred.***" (Constitution *Fraternitatis tuæ* of 03/25/1711, *ibid.* p. 292). Here the election, in a broad sense, understood as an appointment by a superior, was only apparently valid; yet it is made valid from the very beginning.

Similarly a colored title is relied upon for decrees by religious superiors, vol. II pp. 39, 41, 430, 517; or for acts of sovereigns: "*...****we confirm and approve****…And all and each such de jure and de facto defects, and from the solemnities that must necessarily be observed on similar occasions, and any other defect, however formal or substantial, if they have occurred in any way in what has been described or in other principal or accessory aspects, or that can be said, thought, or claimed to have occurred, we most fully and most amply supply, comprehensively supply, and we entirely remove and abolish them*" (vol. II, p. 110).

What's more, the colored title of an externally defective act can have effects in the Church. Once again, Pope Clement XI, having already declared the acts of various people who arrogated to themselves a jurisdiction they did not have as "*null, invalid, and void*" from the beginning, continued: "*And nevertheless, for greater caution, and as to the extent necessary, we revoke, quash, annul, and abolish each and every one of them, emptying them of all force and effect*" (Constitution *Ex commissis* of January 19, 1706, vol. IV, p. 240). If the Pope considers it opportune to invalidate acts that are in themselves invalid from the beginning, it means he recognizes that for some reason they could have had validity, and this "some reason" would have been a potential colored title or putative title.

Furthermore, for the examples cited in footnote 9.

What's more: a person who possesses a merely colored title is not prevented from performing actions and elections. It is worth noting the practice of pontifical acts to absolve individuals, "*ad effectum præsentium tantum consequendum*" and "*huius tantum rei gratia*", from any excommunication, suspension, interdict, sentence, censure and penalty not only on the occasion of simple concessions, but also in the confirmation of past acts of the Sacred Congregations (e.g. *ibid*. vol. II pp. 157, 395, vol. IV p. 696) or of cardinals (vol. II pp. 51, 64, 115, 201, 204, 206, 286); or in the confirmation of acts that have already been performed by **the very persons being absolved** (vol. IV pp. 240, 486); or even in the confirmation of the election **of the person being absolved!** And these elections, shortly before being healed and confirmed, are declared either valid, illicit, or dubiously valid (*ibid*. pp. 264, 517, 646). It even happens that the Pope explicitly recognizes the validity of an election as well as its confirmation by the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda of the Faith, and despite this decides to remedy "*ad cautelam*" all defects, even substantial ones *(ibid*. p. 523).

In these cases, it is not a question of the Pope establishing something *out of thin air*, but rather *confirming* an act (of the electors; of the Roman Congregations) that was already considered valid! But perhaps there was some defect - which tells us that the validity came from a colored title - and therefore the Pope corrected this defect so that the title was *true* with certainty.

And one should not say that absolutions and sanations are only a habitual formula, empty of their effectiveness: the Popes clearly distinguish between confirming an act absolutely and confirming an act "*quatenus canonice fuerit factum*" "insofar as it was done canonically" (in which case they confirm it only on the condition that there are no external defects; e.g., ibid., pp. 213, 220, 739). In the first case, they admit validity by a mere colored title; in the second, they require a true title. It doesn't always happen that Popes absolve; and absolution itself isn't always accompanied by the sanatio of defects; and the sanatio of defects doesn't always also include the substantial ones. In short, it's not a matter of ipso facto, "automatic" absolutions and sanations; the **colored title** is sometimes taken into consideration, and sometimes it is not. (As for the reason for these suppliances of jurisdiction despite the validity of the previous act and title, see what we said about the reason for supplied jurisdiction in footnote 8).

In short, what does the addition of absolutions and sanations mean, if not that the Popes foresee the possibility that these acts and titles are colored (substantially defective)? But even more, what does it mean that such "colored" acts are *confirmed* (a confirmation to which absolution and sanatio are merely added) if not that these acts and titles, even if (externally) defective, are considered to be already valid? It means that the validity of a merely colored title is admitted, a colored title which, though externally flawed, nonetheless grants every validity to an election.

47) This is not the topic of my article, but given its important connection with the colored title, I offer only a quotation and some references.

"*That which Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of shepherds and the supreme Shepherd of sheep, established in the blessed Apostle Peter for the perpetual salvation and perennial good of the Church, by the same Author must endure always in the Church, which was founded upon a rock and will endure firm until the end of the ages. 'No one doubts, rather all ages have known that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince and head of the apostles and pillar of faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the human race; and up to this time and always it is he who, in the person of his successors, the bishops of the holy See of Rome, which was founded by him and consecrated by his blood, who 'lives', presides and 'exercises the power to judge.' (Saint Irenaeus) (...) If anyone then says that it is not from the institution of Christ the Lord Himself, or by divine right that the blessed Peter has perpetual successors in the primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter in the same primacy, let him be anathema.*" ((First) Vatican Council, DS. 3056, 3058).

"'*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' 'To whom,' asks Origen, 'does the word 'it' refer? To the rock on which Christ built the Church, or to the Church itself? The phrase is ambiguous: does it mean that the rock and the Church are almost one and the same thing? I believe this to be true; for neither against the rock on which Christ built the Church, nor against the Church itself will the gates of hell prevail'*" (Leo XIII, encyclical *Satis cognitum*).

An example that can be proposed if, at this point, a reluctance to grant any power to these figures was to re-emerge, at least in the described options: over the centuries and especially after the Protestant revolt and the founding of Freemasonry, it has happened that there have been heretical or Freemason cardinals, and that they have participated in conclaves: without the intervention of a colored title and of a suppleance on the part of Christ, for their vote and therefore perhaps even for the one elected, the apostolicity of the Church would no longer be guaranteed, which is impossible (some examples of these cardinals can be found in *Sodalitium*, nn. 36 and 70-71 cited in footnote 28 for heretical cardinals; and for Freemason cardinals in ROSARIO ESPOSITO, *Le grandi concordanze tra Chiesa e Massoneria* [*The great concordances between the Church and Freemasonry*], Nardini, Florence 1987 in Chapter X - The Freemason Clergy). It is not clear what difficulty lies in admitting a possible legal fiction or a legal presumption implemented by Christ himself with regard to the colored titles we have been speaking about, with the consequent jurisdiction supplied on His part.

The interested reader will find further targeted explanations in *Sodalitium* n. 53 pp. 11-12; n. 55 pp. 18-30; n. 56 pp. 22-24; and in n. 47 pp. 9-13. A particularly clear illustration is in the booklet written by Father Francesco Ricossa: *Don Paladino e la "tesi di Cassiciacum"* [*Father Paladino and the "Thesis of Cassiciacum"*], CLS, Verrua Savoia 1999 https://www.sodalitiumshop.it/prodotto/don-paladino-e-la-tesi-di-cassiciacum-risposta-al-libro-petrus-es-tu/

I also recommend the second session of the 20th *Convegno di studi albertariani* https://youtu.be/uqCbJEd3Tu8

48) *Intervista*... (reference in footnote 12). We note en passant that this interview was released *after* the book by B. Lucien cited in this article (footnote 22)

Fr. Guérard preaching from the pulpit at Steffenhausen

Exegesis

The Disciple whom Jesus loved: Saint John the Apostle

Father Ugolino Giugni

After having written about Saint Paul in the last issue of *Sodalitium*, in this article I would like to talk about Saint John the Apostle. Most of all I would like to discuss him from the perspective of his being an inspired writer, the author of the fourth Gospel, the Apocalypse and the three letters found in Sacred Scripture. But I would also like to consider his sublime dignity among the apostles, because he was the beloved disciple of the Lord and because it was to him alone that the Redeemer, from the height of the Cross, entrusted His holy Mother.

The disciple whom Jesus loved

In the fourth Gospel, unlike the three Synoptics, we see that the author says of himself: "This is the disciple who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things" (Jn 21:24). "That disciple" undoubtedly designates "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn. 20:2), like a veiled signature on the part of the author of this Gospel. Who, then, is the disciple whom Jesus loved? This designation appears five times [1] after the Last Supper (it is not used before). Prior to this the Gospel speaks only of a disciple (unnamed) who is among the first to follow Jesus, after being a disciple of John the Baptist (Jn. 1:35-44). And then, during our Lord's trial, a disciple "known to the high priest" is named, who thanks to this acquaintance allows Saint Peter into the courtyard of the high priest's house. The Synoptics say that the Lord's most beloved disciples were Peter, James and John (witnesses of the Transfiguration and His agony). Therefore the *disciple whom Jesus loved* is found among these three, and by exclusion it could only be Saint John. [2] Saint John Chrysostom says: "If you want to learn the reason for this familiarity, it consists in love. Therefore it says the *one whom Jesus loved*; for although the others were also loved, this one, however, was loved more." [3] Furthermore, as Origen points out, Jesus' preference for his disciples could only be manifested by making them privy to the mysteries and secrets of the revelation of the Word of God.

In the fourth Gospel, we see that the author says of himself: "This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things" (Jn 21:24). "That disciple" undoubtedly designates "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn. 20:2), like a veiled signature on the part of the author of this Gospel. Who, then, is the disciple whom Jesus loved?

Saint Thomas explains the affection that Jesus had for Saint John thus: "John relates three things about himself here. First, the love he had for Christ by resting on him (...) Second, that Christ desired to reveal to him the knowledge of secrets, especially in writing this Gospel; hence, note that he leaned on Jesus' breast. And the breast precisely indicates the secret of a person. Third, the special love by which Christ loved Him. It is not that He loved him uniquely, in an exclusive way, but He loved him in a more excellent way than the others.

It should be kept in mind that John was favored by Christ for three reasons. First, for the purity of his chastity, because he was chosen by the Lord as a virgin and remained a virgin forever. As is written in Proverbs 22:11: '*He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious, will have*

the king for a friend.' Second, for the sublimity of his wisdom, because in a more elevated way than the others, he penetrated the mysteries of the Divinity, so that John is compared to an eagle. As is stated in Proverbs 14:35, '*A wise minister is loved by the king.*' Third, for the impetuous fervor of this affection for Christ; since, as Wisdom alludes to in Proverbs 8:17: *'I love those who love me.*'" Saint Augustine says that the "singular privilege of chastity made him worthy of the favor of Jesus Christ, because having been chosen a virgin, he always remained a virgin."

We also note that in the Gospel, Saint John is distinguished from the other Apostles precisely by the title of the beloved disciple of the Lord (*discipulus quem diligebat Jesus)*. "This title is more glorious than any ever invented by human ambition and flattery for its true or pretended heroes, because, proceeding from eternal, infallible truth, it manifests to us on the one hand the gratuitous predilection of the Lord toward the Apostle and on the other the excellent merit and the incomparable love that he bore for the divine Savior. Although all the favors shown by Jesus to his beloved disciple are very remarkable, two among them particularly captivate the admiration of the Holy Fathers.

The first was the freedom that He gave him to rest his head upon His breast, and this was done even in public and in the presence of everyone; not just once, but, as Saint Augustine notes, ordinarily and, one could say, every time they dined together: 'Discumbere super pectus ejus solitus erat' (St. Aug. lib de Virg. c. 27). This favor not only manifested predilection but also a cordial and intimate familiarity. This was the source from which the holy Apostle drew in greater abundance the sublime knowledge of the divine mysteries that he manifested to the world. After Mary and Joseph, no one else more than John enjoyed the familiarity and intimacy of the Divine Master. (...) *draw near to Him and thus be enlightened* (Ps. 33:6)" [(5)].

Dom Guéranger wrote: "This unique expression by the holy Evangelist - *The Disciple*

Saint John the Evangelist with the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper (S. Monte di Varallo)

whom Jesus loved - says more than any commentary in its admirable concision. Peter, without a doubt, was chosen to be the head of the Apostles and the foundation of the Church; he was more honored; but John was more loved. Peter received the command to love more than the others and he was able to respond to Christ three times that he would indeed do so. Nevertheless, John was more loved by Christ than Peter himself, because it was right that his Virginity be honored.

Chastity of the senses and the heart has the virtue of bringing the person who possesses it closer to God, and drawing God toward him. It is for this reason that at the solemn moment of the Last Supper - that fruitful Supper which was to be renewed on the altar until the end of time to revive life in souls and heal their wounds - John was placed next to Jesus himself.

(...) The Savior added for his Beloved Disciple an unprecedented outpouring of love, because chastity, by turning man away from base and selfish affections, elevates him to a purer and more generous love. John welcomed the discourses of Jesus into his heart; he made the Church to be a participant in them, and above all,

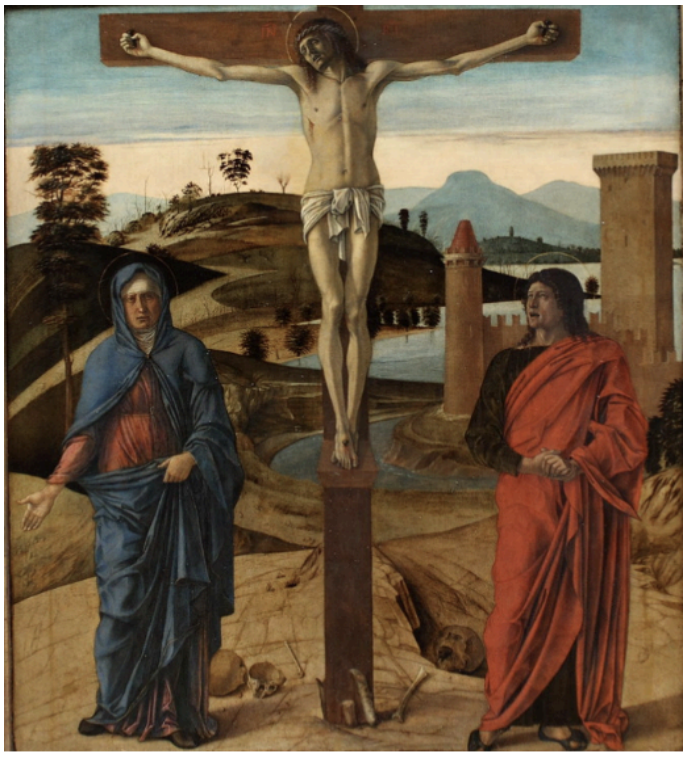
he revealed the divine Sermon of the Last Supper in which the soul of the Redeemer pours itself out - *having loved His own, He loved them to the end* (Jn 13:1). He wrote the Epistles, and did so to tell men that *God is love* (1 Jn 4:8), that *whoever does not love does not know God*, and that *charity casts out fear* (*ibid.* 18). Until the end of his life, even into the days of his extreme old age, he insisted on the love that men owe to one another, following the example of God who loved them. And just as he had announced the divinity and splendor of the Word more clearly than the others, so more than the others did he show himself to be the Apostle of that infinite charity that the Emmanuel came to bring to the earth." (6)

Venerable Bede says of St. John: "*The fact that he leaned on his bosom and breast was not only a sign of his present love, but also the sign of a future reality, that is, of those new and mysterious doctrines that would be entrusted to him to communicate to the world.*"

The Son of Mary

In the Gospel of Saint John Chapter 19:25-26, we read the passage in which Jesus entrusts His Blessed Mother to the disciple whom He loved more than the others: "*Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.*"

Within this pericope we have indicated the spiritual maternity of Mary towards all humanity which was entrusted to her, so that she may be their mother in the person of Saint John. The Apostle had been ordained a priest on the previous Holy Thursday, and therefore, he was a public figure, he had a role in the Church, thus representing all men. For this reason, the Lord entrusts his Mother to him and entrusts him to her in a mutual relationship of filiation and motherhood. The words of Jesus are the words of God, and as such, they are supremely effective and achieve their intended effect. What they imply is truly realized: John truly becomes the son of Mary, and Our Lady truly becomes his mother - his mother and our mother. Jesus is saying to John (and in him to all mankind): *Behold thy mother* - love her as a mother, listen to her counsel like those of your mother! The Lord here reunites his dearest human affections - his holy mother and his beloved disciple - and gives them to one another. It is a testament before he dies: from that moment Mary truly and spiritually becomes our mother, and we truly become her children. *And from that hour, the disciple took her as his own.* From that time on, Saint John took Our Lady as his own until the end of her days (she would live with him at Ephesus). Saint Thomas says that *he took her as his own* means "not as a possession, but as a duty, which he attended with great ability." His Mother is the most precious treasure that the Lord entrusts to the beloved disciple as recompense of his affection for the Master and because, having rested his head on the breast of Jesus, he merited to be



Our Lady and Saint John at the foot of the Cross
(Giovanni Bellini, 1465)

communicated the mysteries of divine Wisdom that no one else was granted to penetrate.

Dom Guéranger comments on this passage: "But the Lord reserved for him a gift truly worthy of the Virgin and beloved disciple. Dying on the cross, Jesus was leaving Mary behind on the earth; it had been several years now that Joseph had given up his soul to the Lord. Who, then, would watch over such a sacred deposit? Who would have been worthy to receive it? Would Jesus send his angels to guard and console his Mother? What man on earth could have merited such an honor? From the height of the Cross, the Savior beholds the virgin disciple: everything is fixed. John will be a son to Mary, Mary will be a mother to John; the chastity of the disciple has made him worthy to receive such a glorious legacy. Thus - according to what was so eloquently shown by Saint Damian - Peter will receive the safekeeping of the Church, the Mother of men; but John will receive Mary, the Mother of God. He will guard her as his own possession, take the place of his divine friend at her side, love her as his own mother, and will be like a son to her." (8)

"The other unique favor that captures the admiration of the Fathers is the gift made by the dying Jesus to John of His most beloved Mother, a favor so remarkable and a proof of predilection so notable that Saint Jerome affirms that this fact alone is the most splendid panagyric that can be made of Saint John. And enraptured by admiration, Saint John Chrysostom exclaimed: '*O honorem quem discípulo tribuit*!' [*O what an honor He bestowed upon the disciple!*] Thus, by the disposition of Jesus' testament, he became Mary's guardian, she who is the true mother of God and Queen of the universe! It is a gift that renders him eternally admirable before the entire heavenly court." (9)

Saint Ambrose says: "John taught what others have not taught: how, from the cross on which He hung, He called to his mother. He thought it a greater thing that the Victor over the torturers display his duties of piety toward his mother, than to grant the heavenly kingdom of eternal life; indeed it was religious to give life to the thief, yet it is a much richer work of piety for a son to honor his mother with such affection. *Woman, behold thy son; son behold thy mother.* Christ makes His testament from the cross, and divides the duties of piety between His mother and the disciple. Our Lord made not just a public testament, but also a familial testament. And this testament John sealed, as he was a worthy witness of so great a Testator. A good testament it was, not of money, but of eternal life, which was not written with ink, but with the spirit of the living God." (10)

Saint John and the "Logos"

From this predilection that the Lord manifested to John, which we have talked about in the preceding paragraphs, comes the Apostle's doctrine and he, like an eagle, soars up to heaven to penetrate the mysteries of God. Indeed, filled with divine Wisdom, he alone speaks to us of the "*Logos*" (in Greek, corresponding to *Verbum* in Latin) who is Christ Jesus. Already in his prologue, John presents Jesus as the eternal Word of God, equal to the Father from whom he was begotten, creator of all things - life, light, truth and the principle and cause of every grace and every resurrection. In this regard, Abbot Ricciotti writes: "And this singular witness begins his writing by affirming that Jesus is the divine *Logos* made man. But even in this statement, he shows his historical sense although applied to a theological vision of the facts: that *Logos* who is from eternity with God became man a few years ago, and '*we beheld his glory, glory as it were of an only begotten of the Father.*' (1:14) But never does the true witness, scrupulous in his historicity, affirm that Jesus called himself *Logos*. John, and he alone, calls him by this name, both in the prologue to his Gospel and in his letter which can be considered as a companion writing to the Gospel (1 Jn 1:1), as well as in the Apocalypse (19:13). In the entire New Testament, the personal term *Logos* occurs in three places only. From this, it can be concluded that the term was used neither in the catechesis that

began with Peter, nor by that which began with Paul: on the contrary, in the oral catechesis of John, the term must have been habitual, since he uses it from his first lines without any explanation, certainly assuming that it was already known to his readers. The term, as a simple word, had already been known to Greek philosophy from the time of Heraclitus onward. However, over the centuries, this same term corresponded to different concepts, whether among the Sophists, the Socratics (logic), or the Stoics. The Alexandrian Jew Philo also made great use of the *Logos* in his speculations, but his concept is different from that of the Greeks and is closer to the 'Wisdom' of the Old Testament. Until a few years ago, it was confidently asserted that John had derived the concept of his *Logos* from one or the other of the aforementioned theories, but more commonly from Philo. In reality, John's *Logos*, an essentially divine and uncreated hypostasis, is entirely different from Philo's Logos, which appears as an entity fluctuating between personality and divine attribute, and almost serving as an intermediate link between the material God and the corporeal world. In any case, it would now be pointless to insist on this, since the difference between the two concepts of the Logos has recently been recognized by the most radical scholars. Loisy himself, who while in his first edition of the commentary on the fourth Gospel (1903, pp. 121-122) had maintained that the partial influence of Philonian ideas on John could not be denied, in the second edition (1921, p. 88) he judged a literary dependence on Philo to be improbable, believing that John's *Logos* is *rather a continuation of the personifications of Wisdom in the Old Testament*. It is what the old Scholastics had been saying for centuries. (...) It must therefore be concluded that John's concept of the *Logos* is unique to him, and finds no true correspondence in earlier concepts. As for the term which John used to express this concept, it seems that he used it, finding it suitable for the concept and already widespread in the Greco-Roman world, he wanted to approach that world at least by way of terminology, and thus win it over to the *Logos* Jesus. He therefore became Greek with the Greeks, just as Paul similarly became all things to all people, with Jews and non-Jews, to win everyone over to the good news (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

It is said that Christopher Colombus, when he was caught in a tempest during his voyages, used to stand on the prow of the ship and, standing there, recite the beginning of the Gospel of John in the face of the stormy sea: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God…All things were made by Him…* The prophecy of the creator *Logos* resounded over the disturbing elements of creation: it was the explorer of the world who commented in his own way on the explorer of God." [(11)]

Who was Saint John the Apostle?

We know from the Gospels that Saint John was the son of Zebedee and Mary Salome (perhaps a relative of the Blessed Virgin Mary and therefore John also belonged to the house of David) (Mt. 27:56). His brother was James the Greater, and like his father, he practiced the fisherman's trade. His family was likely well-off as his father had hired hands. His mother, Salome, was one of the pious women who followed Jesus providing everything He needed.

A disciple of John the Baptist, upon hearing his master call Jesus "the lamb of God", he went after him to find out where he lived (Jn 1:39). While one day with his brother James, he was mending the nets on a boat, and Jesus called them both to the apostolate: "and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired hands, and followed him (Mark 1:20). Jesus named them "Boanerges" (Sons of Thunder), a name of honor given them because of their character. In fact, Theophylact says that the two brothers were "eminent preachers and theologians".

From this moment on, John never again abandoned his new Master, but was His companion during his public ministry in Galilee, in Judea, up to His crucifixion on Calvary. He thus

Saint John the Evangelist, depicted with an eagle

became one of the beloved disciples, and Jesus willed that he be a witness to the resurrection of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:37), to His transfiguration (Mt 17:1), and to His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:37). He entrusted him, along with Peter, with the preparation of the Passover meal (Lk 22:8), allowed him to rest his head upon His breast (Jn 13:25), and before dying, left him His Blessed Mother Mary as a legacy (Jn 19:27). He was the only one of the Apostles present at the foot of the Cross, along with Our Lady and the pious women (Jn 19:26), while the other Apostles watched the drama on Calvary from a distance.

After hearing the account of the women returning from the tomb, he, along with Peter, immediately ran to see what had happened (Jn 20: 1-10). In an apparition of the resurrected Jesus on the Sea of Tiberias, he was the first to recognize the Divine Master (Jn 21:7). After Jesus' Ascension, he remained for some time in Jerusalem, and, with Saint Peter, took a leading role in the Jerusalem Church. He was present at the miracle performed by the Prince of the Apostles on the cripped man sitting at the temple gate (Acts 3:11), and with the same Prince of Apostles, was imprisoned and had to suffer greatly from the Jews (Acts 4:3 ff).

He later went with Saint Peter to Samaria to complete the work of evangelization begun by Deacon Philip and to impart the Holy Ghost on the new converts (Acts 8:14-17). On Paul's second journey to Jerusalem, John was in this city and was one of those "who were reputed to be pillars" together with Peter and his brother James (Gal 2:9). In the final years of his life, for his Christian faith, he was relegated to the island of Patmos where he had the visions of the Apocalypse. He exercised supremacy over the churches in Asia Minor (Rev 1:9) and died in Ephesus. "Historically reliable tradition attests five facts relating to John: he was the youngest of the Apostles; he had the prerogative of virginity; he later lived in Ephesus where, after the exile, he suffered on the island of Patmos (Rev 1:19), and he died a natural death under Trajan in extreme old age.

Saint Jerome attests that 'very clearly attested by ecclesiastical histories is that at that time John [when he was with Jesus] was still a boy.' John's virginity is affirmed by the Monarchian Prologue 'So that he who was a virgin, might serve Him as a virgin'. John's residence at Ephesus is confirmed by Irenaeus and Eusebius who placed his withdrawal to Ephesus at the beginning of the Jewish uprising (circa 67 a.d.). [13] Epiphanius says that John 'wrote the Gospel after the 90th year of his life'; Agapius of Hieropolis says: 'he lived 71 years after the Passion of Our Lord and died in the 6th year of Trajan's reign'. Of his death, Tertullian wrote: 'John died, (to demonstrate) that the hope that he would remain until the coming of the Lord, was in vain'. Likewise Hilary." [14] Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, who wrote about 185 and who had been a disciple of Saint Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of John the Apostle and Evangelist, says (Adversus Haereses III, 4): "The Church at Ephesus founded by Paul, in which John was present up to the age of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the Apostles." Polycrates, the eighth bishop of Ephesus, who lived toward the end of the second century, in a letter to Pope Victor wrote: "Here in Asia, rest many luminaries… John

who rested on Our Lord's breast…This John I say died in Ephesus."

Saint John before the Latin Gate

Toward the end of his life, John was sent to Rome and here, according to Tertullian, suffered martyrdom by being submerged in boiling oil, but suffered nothing. He was later sent into exile on the island of Patmos near Ephesus. Released from exile he returned to Ephesus, where he died in the early years of Trajan's reign. This news of the martyrdom of Saint John deserves full credence as Tertullian was perfectly familiar with the Roman traditions of the third century.

The Golden Legend [15] says that "When the Apostles separated after Pentecost, he [John the Evangelist] went to Asia, where he founded many churches. When the Emperor Domitian learned of his fame, he had him brought to Rome where he was thrown into a vessel of boiling oil, immediately before the Latin Gate: but John was unharmed, as he remained a stranger to the corruption of the flesh. The Emperor, seeing that even thus he did not desist in preaching, sent him to Patmos in exile, where in complete solitude he wrote the *Apocalypse*." The Roman Breviary, already cited above, in the lessons of the second nocturn of May 6 says: "Then Tertullian recounts

Saint John before the Latin Gate

that, thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil in Rome, Saint John came out more pure and hale than when he entered it." The Church wishes to celebrate the martyrdom of the Evangelist who, according to the Savior's prediction (and this too is another argument in favor of the authenticity of the feast), would have merited to drink the chalice of passion together with his brother, so as to have the right to sit on one of the thrones of the messianic kingdom (*My chalice indeed you shall drink; but to sit on my right or left hand, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father.* Mt 20:23).

The feast of John before the Latin Gate is celebrated on May 6, but under John XXIII it was suppressed from the Roman calendar with the reform of 1962, carried out by Annibale Bugnini's Commission for Liturgical Reform, as it was considered a "redundant" and an "unhistorical" feast according to the principles of the modernists. Dom Guéranger, with regard to this feast, rightly noted that "the Roman Church, whose glories preserve among its most glorious the sojourn and martyrdom of John, has marked with a Basilica the place where the Apostle gave his noble testimony to the Christian faith. The Basilica is located near the Latin Gate, and a cardinal title is attached to it." [16] But it is known that for the modernists and rationalists, the strong argument of the millenary tradition of the Church has little value…and can be trampled upon and despised with impunity.

The Fourth Gospel

The fourth Gospel is completely different from the others; it insists more than the others on affirming the divinity of Jesus Christ. Its author soars like an eagle (this is why Saint John the Evangelist is depicted with this animal) above the other three Synoptic Gospels, reaching the absolutely unique heights of doctrine and spirituality. For this reason, the rationalists and modernists have tried to discredit it and, to do so more effectively, sought to deny that it was written by Saint John the Apostle. However, the Church

and tradition teach us that the author of the fourth Gospel is the Apostle John. The Pontifical Biblical Commission has clearly affirmed this in its response on May 29, 1907 during the reign of Saint Pius X: "It is demonstrated with a sufficiently solid historical argument that John the Apostle and no one else is to be recognized as the author of the fourth Gospel." [17] Furthermore, the internal arguments that are adduced in proving that John the Apostle is the author of the fourth Gospel are so numerous and so clearly evident that only a mind blinded by prejudices would refuse to admit them. Let's see the main ones. "Tradition since the post-Apostolic age explicitly recognizes it, as did Papias of Hieropolis, Irenaeus, the Muratorian Fragment, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Origen, etc.; the most ancient and unanimous testimony of the entire Church, expressed by Eusebius: 'It is to be recognized as his (John's) Gospel, thus being admitted by all the churches under heaven' (Eccl III, 24)." [19] Papias is of the utmost importance, because he did not use his own words, but preserved the sayings of ancient witnesses. His text is also included in a Latin prologue to the Gospels found in many manuscripts and is also reproduced and preserved by Eusebius.

"Text of the Prologue: *'The argument according to John begins. The Gospel of John was published and given to the churches (in Asia) by John when he was still alive in his body, as is reported by Papias (Bishop) of Hierapolis, a close disciple of John, in his Esoterica, that is in his last five books'.* These last words poorly translate the 'exegetic' title of the book. According to John 21:24, the Gospel of John might appear to be a posthumous work, that is, published by another person after the death of the author. Papias rejects this opinion. It is not a question, therefore, directly of the composition of the book, which is clearly recognizable to all, but rather its publication. It is attributed to that disciple of Christ, whose death was in doubt both because of Christ's saying, as well as to his extreme old age - hence to the Apostle John himself. The supreme authority of this testimony comes from the fact that Papias, a disciple of John, says so himself and that his testimony is very close in time to the composition of the book." [20]

"Another testimony of even greater historical value is furnished by Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, formerly a disciple of Saint Polycarp, who around the year 185 wrote (Adv. Haeres. III,1): '*Finally, John the disciple of the Lord, who even rested his head upon His breast, also wrote a Gospel while he was living in Ephesus.*' Now, that Saint Irenaeus meant to speak of Saint John the Apostle is clearly deduced from the following facts: 1) because he mentioned that he rested his head upon His breast, 2) because, by citing in his work about one hundred verses of the Fourth Gospel as 'John', he twice gives to him the title of Apostle; 3) because he numbers him among the Apostles; 4) and finally from all the works of Saint Irenaeus it is clear that he knows only one John, and he is the Apostle. It is not necessary to insist on proving the great value of this testimony, since the arguments to the contrary adopted by Harnack and other rationalists are nowadays rejected by the protestants themselves. We find the same truth affirmed by Clement of Alexandria († C. 217), who wrote having received it from the tradition of the ancient presbyters: 'John, last of all (the Evangelists), seeing *that in the Gospels (by the others) were narrated things which regarded the human part of Christ, and being urged by his disciples and by the impulse of the Holy Ghost, composed a spiritual Gospel*' (Eusebius H.E. VI, 25)" [21] . One can add to these testimonies those of Origen, Saint Justin, Tertullian, Diogenus of Alexandria, Eusebius and almost all Later Fathers.

• **Scope of the Gospel.** John himself in chapter 20:31 affirms: "*But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in His name*." From these words we understand that he set himself the goal of confirming his readers in the Messianic faith and in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and all the pages of his book aim at this goal. One cannot deny, however, that he also wrote his Gospel with the polemic purpose of combatting the errors of the early "antichrists" about whom John

speaks in this epistles (1 John 1:8; 2:4, 3:4-8), like Cerinthus, the Ebionites, the Docets and Nicolaites, that is, the early gnostic heresies that denied the Divinity of Christ and His Messianic dignity, claiming that his humanity was only apparent, and that the Word of God had united himself with the man Jesus from his baptism up to the time of, but excluding, his Passion. Furthermore, there is no doubt, and this is also confirmed by ancient writers, that Saint John wished to complete the narrative of the three Synoptic Gospels by recounting omitted events, either by recounting events that occurred prior to the imprisonment of Saint John the Baptist, or by writing a "spiritual Gospel" that highlighted the intimate nature of Jesus Christ. The fourth Gospel was not addressed to the Jews or the Christians of the first generation, but rather the adult and educated Christians who already knew the elements of doctrine ("*and of his fullness, we have all received*" John 1:16) taught by the Savior, and which only required confirmation in the faith against false doctrines spread by heretics.

• **When the fourth Gospel was written.** Although the exact year in which it was written cannot be precisely determined, it is generally accepted that it dates back to the last decade of the first century, that is, around the years 95-100. A number of internal clues confirm this opinion, since the fourth Gospel was certainly written after the Synoptics, and moreover Chapter 21:19 suggests that the death of Saint Peter had already occurred, and the way in which the Jews are spoken of throughout the book clearly shows they have ceased to be a people, and the ancient city and the ancient temple are nothing but a heap of ruins (Jn 11:55, 13:33, 18:20,36). It should not be overlooked that the errors mentioned above, against which the fourth Gospel is directed, did not spread until towards the end of the first century.

The author of the Monarchian prologues also says that Saint John wrote his Gospel after he returned from his exile at Patmos, which brings it close to the year 96, but this affirmation regarding the precise time is far from being certain. Whatever this may be, it is beyond doubt that the fourth Gospel was not later than the first century, since it is quoted in the writing of Saint Ignatius, of Saint Polycarp, and perhaps even of Saint Clement. As to the **place** where it was written, as we have seen above, there is the testimony of Saint Irenaeus who says that John wrote it while he was living in Ephesus, that is, in accordance with all ancient tradition and even modern criticism." [(22)] The **language** in which it was written is Greek, but with many semitic expressions (often translated into the Greek to make it comprehendible to his readers) and sentence constructions specific to Hebrew.

• **Characteristics of the Gospel.** "Saint John the Evangelist misses no opportunity to underscore the concrete evidence of the humanity of Jesus, His union and unity with the Father, His absolute identity with the pre-existent Son of God; and he cites various messianic prophecies that were fulfilled during the life of Christ. But while this vibrant affirmation and defense of the truth was a good occasion for the publication of John's Gospel, it does not seem to exhaust all the reasons. For example, John is careful to provide chronological indications that allow us to gain greater clarity on, and to establish a more secure order for the historical unfolding of Jesus' life, which, in the Synoptics, appears contracted. (...)

John follows his own path, but counts on the knowledge his readers have about the life of Jesus based on the first three Gospels (he takes advantage of opportunities for enrichments and clarifications that have a clear end of completion), especially for facts and words essential to the economy of the Christian message. The fourth Gospel is a book of 'things seen', but at the same time it is a book of dazzling illuminations. The reader cannot defend himself from the weight of these two parallel observations. Having just breathlessly finished reading the prologue, one immediately encounters indications of days and hours (see Ch. 1), which place a precise narrative in a specific temporal context. In contrast with the scarcity of narrated facts, John indicates about twenty names of localities, some of which have such reliable specifications that they reveal a man

who saw them with his own eyes. The case of the pool of five porticoes mentioned in 5:2 is a classic example: something which at first glance seems unreal, but which was revealed to have precisely this unusual feature under the archaeologist's pickaxe. The environment of Palestine is extraordinarily alive and present, with its customs and traditions, its parochial squabbles (1:46), its age-old antipathies (4:9). The personality of Jesus is revealed in its most sublime and transcendental aspect as well as in its most humble ones; his polemics have a typically Jewish background and his words a very clear Aramaic structure. (...)

Another characteristic aspect of John is his predilection for abstract notions combined with violent concrete notations. Ideas and symbols, however, never stem from the responsibility of the Evangelist, but flourish from the lips of Jesus; and the author's scrupulous fidelity is such that the term *Logos* (word) used in the prologue is never used by Christ; in this way he intends to make a clear distinction, and supports the other words of Jesus with his authority as a witness." [23]

Saint John focuses on narrating the divine things about Jesus, but states many times that he narrates the pure truth, and that his testimony must be trusted ("*And he that saw it, hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe*" (Jn 19:35), therefore the discourses of Jesus that we find in his Gospel and which were considered by many rationalists and protestants as theological meditations ("the 4th Gospel is a theological theorem that barely retains the appearances of a history" says the modernist Loisy) or spurious Hellenistic speculations placed into His mouth, must be considered as true and real, and objectively pronounced by the Lord. In John's Gospel, there are no parables (which instead we find in the Synoptics) but allegories prevail, pointing to a higher reality in both Christ's words and works. Many recurring symbols appear, such as light, darkness, water, the world, flesh, life and death, truth, justice, and sin.

Ricciotti writes: "If the ardent John, the true son of thunder (Mk 3:17), while still very young, began following first John the Baptist and then Jesus, he could have been deprived of his later master at the age of little more than twenty. Then, faithful to the customs of his religion, he concentrated on the study of the Law, but not the one investigated in contemporary rabbinical schools, but rather that new Law of perfection and love that had been proclaimed by his last master, and whose memories - even without his writing anything - were preserved very clearly in his mind. In the archive of memory, which was the only archive that functioned in the rabbinical school of the time, John was able for many years to carry out a loving work on those treasures deposited by his late master; who, just as He had had a particular predilection for the very young disciple, He must have also shared with him special confidences and communications. From this work of mental editing and practical arrangement, arose the 'catechesis' specific to John, different but not contrary to that of Peter and the Synoptics, partially supplementary to them, partially explanatory, and above all better responsive to the new external conditions of the Christian message (...).

This pre-history explains the special nature of John's writings, already called the spiritual Gospel par excellence. In every way, it highlights the transcendence and divinity of Christ Jesus, because this was its main purpose (20:31) against the gnosis of pagan origin: hence its particular character." [24]

Saint John the eyewitness

In the preceding paragraph, we have already seen how, according to Salvatore Garofalo, the Fourth Gospel is "a book of things seen", and how, according to Ricciotti, John draws from the archive of his memory. I would like to delve deeper into this issue here. St. John writes: "*This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things*" (Jn 21:24); these words mean that he bears witness to the things he saw, that he lived through everything to which he was eyewitness. This is most important, because the testimony he gave us

is first hand and supports the historicity of the Gospels and what they narrate in an extraordinary way.

Jesus' long discourse after the Last Supper, which only John reports in his Gospel, is another eyewitness testimony. Having heard the sublime words which remained imprinted on his heart, he does not want them to be lost, but passes them on to posterity for everlasting memory. Once again, John is "*the disciple who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things, and we know that his testimony is true*" (Jn 21:24)

Furthermore, if we study the renowned relics of the Passion, we recognize that the medical and scientific knowledge we have today allows us to better understand what the Fourth Gospel tells us about the Passion itself. [25] These celebrated relics of the Passion of Jesus are, as the three linen cloths are called, the **Holy Shroud of Turin**, the **Holy Tunic of Argenteuil** near Paris, and the **Sudarium of Oviedo** in Spain. Their characteristics confirm what is written in the Gospels, in particular Chapter 20 of the Gospel of Saint John. It is important to note that the Evangelist refers to these three relics because, being the last to write his Gospel, he is addressing a well-structured Church and a Church that very probably already knew of and venerated these three relics (everything leads us to presume that they were preserved and guarded with veneration since the moment of Our Lord's Passion and Resurrection) otherwise it would be difficult to understand why John speaks of them in this way.

• The Tunic of Argenteuil is seamless, as is written in the Gospels, when it is drawn by lot by the soldiers: "*The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments, and they made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his tunic. Now the tunic was seamless, woven from the top throughout*" (Jn 19:23). We can easily imagine St. John at the foot of the Cross seeing the dying Lord and at the same time his eyes are drawn to the soldiers casting lots for Christ's Tunic: they did this before him, and so he recounts it in detail. As a pious Jew, he knew the Psalms

The sacred Tunic of Argenteuil

and naturally his thoughts went to Psalm 21 (which is the messianic one on the sufferings of Christ) and he saw its application before his own eyes.

• The Sudarium of Ovieto is the mortuary cloth that was placed on the head of Jesus, which John and Peter found in the tomb after the Resurrection. The testimony about it that John gives us is just that of an eyewitness: he contemplates "and the sudarium that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapped up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw and believed" (Jn 20:7) [26]

Medical and scientific knowledge today allows us to note that the bloodstains on the Sudarium correspond to those on the face of the Shroud. We find the same thing in the bloodstains on the Tunic, of which there are nine, and overlap those on the Shroud. All this proves that it is the same person who suffered these pains.

• The Holy Shroud of Turin (*he went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths laid out* - Jn 20:6) shows, with traces of the Passion, that what is said in the Gospels is true. The spear thrust, the blood flowing down the body to the right (the heart is on the right, like the spear thrust that Jesus received, but while the Gospels do not tell us on which side he received it, the Shroud lets us know). Pathologists say that blood does not normally sediment in the body, therefore the blood

and water of which Saint John speaks ("one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water" Jn 19:34) must be plasma fluid (which is one of the components of blood). Furthermore, it can be proven that the body contained in the Shroud did not remain wrapped there for a long time… (the cadaverous rigidity that the Shroud shows us generally disappears after 20-24 hours) and that the body did not undergo putrefaction… Furthermore, that the body disappeared from the Shroud without being torn, without marks on the stone nor on the fabric, leaving the sheet intact, and this is something extraordinary. The approximately 120 blows received by Jesus during the flagellation can be counted both on the Tunic (it is stained with blood) and on the Shroud - they loudly proclaim the truth of what Saint John wrote.

The Three Epistles

Among the apostolic or canonical letters, we find three letters attributed to Saint John; these exhibit intimate similarities both among themselves and with the Gospel. The style, the recurrence of certain themes, and the vocabulary all point to a close relationship between the three letters. The author, therefore, must be a single person and must be identified with the fourth evangelist. Internal data and very ancient testimonies from Church tradition attest to this. "However, while the first letter has been received with equal favor everywhere, the other two letters have left many perplexed as to their canonicity.

This, moreover, is entirely understandable given the brevity and strictly private nature of the letters and from the fact that the sender describes himself as 'the presbyter', like the author of the Apocalypse, who was regarded with suspicion in the Greek world at the time.

Any doubts, however, disappear as early as the 5th century. Today, scholarly criticism advocates for the Johannine authenticity of the two letters. In fact, if one were to question it, one would run into two insoluble problems: how could two writings of no particular importance have imposed themselves on Christian communities if they did not come from an illustrious author? What reason could have prompted an anonymous writer to attribute such humble texts to John?

The second and third letters, very short, have a clear epistolary form, with an address, a signature, and a greeting. These formulas are absent in the first, which presents itself rather as a homily to instruct readers with whom the author is on familiar and intimate terms; and has all the markings of being a preface to the Fourth Gospel." (27)

The first is believed to have been written at Ephesus after his Gospel and as an accompaniment to it, that is, about the year 96-100. It was destined probably to the Church in Asia Minor, the same place to which his Gospel was destined. The purpose was to combat the errors and false doctors and false prophets who were seducing the faithful by denying that Christ was the Messiah, and to confirm the latter in faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ and to the reality and universality of his sacrifice. In the first letter we find the famous Johannine Comma (5:7-8), which I cannot treat in depth here since it goes beyond the scope of this article.

"The second letter is addressed to 'a lady Elect', which probably indicates a Church, or - absent the article - a community of the faithful, likely of Asia Minor, threatened by the propaganda of false doctors.

The third letter is directed to a certain Gaius, a fervent member of the Church in Asia Minor, to whom he had already addressed a letter unanswered (perhaps the second letter of John?), due to the intrusion of a certain Diotrephes who aspired to the primacy. Other exegetes, however, believe that this third letter is actually the first in order of composition, that is, prior to the secession of the antichrists, a topic discussed in the other two and which here seems not to have occurred yet." (27)

The Apocalypse

The Apocalypse is the last book of the Holy Bible, the name meaning "revelation" and containing, almost exclusively, visions granted by God to its author John with the express command to write them (1:1). They deal with future things that must be fulfilled, but not only this. The book "presents itself as a letter addressed to seven Churches of the province of Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea), representing the universal Church. Special warnings are addressed to the seven Churches (Ch. 2-3) before the unfolding of the visions.

The author calls himself John (Rev 1:1, 1:4, 1:9, 22:8), a name that is presumed to be well known in the Churches of Asia. It is the Apostle John, who in his last years lived at Ephesus, 'brother and partner in tribulation' (1:9), and who had a significant part in nascent Christianity in the province of Asia. The Johannine origin has been confirmed by unanimous tradition since the second century. The authenticity is confirmed by internal examination, from which it appears that the author is a Palestinian Jew (continuous Hebrew expressions, inexperience in the use of Greek, an awareness of the temple and connected institutions), and that his conceptualizations and style reflect that of the Fourth Gospel. In the two works, visual aspects prevail, dramatic movement which leads to contemplation, the recourse to allegory." (28)

The Apocalypse was written in Greek, while the author was on the island of Patmos where he was in exile (1:9), about the year 95 (it is thought that it precedes the Fourth Gospel) since Irenaeus, Victorinus of Pettau, Eusebius and Saint Jerome attest that it took place at the end of the Domitian empire. "The traditional date is confirmed by the internal criticism: 1) the letters to the seven Churches (Ch. 2-3) suppose that these communities had been founded for several decades, and the Nicolaite heresy that was wreaking havoc among them appears to have remote origins since it flourishes widely and yet is

Celestial Jerusalem
(Tapestry of the Apocalypse, from Angers France 1382)

still unknown in the Pauline epistles; 2) the text reveals that a violent persecution had already passed, moderating to the point that the Asian Churches do not even think about it, but that it is smoldering under the ashes. These circumstances correspond to the reign of Domitian, who persecuted Christians who refused imperial worship, subjecting them to deportation, so that the prospects for the future were very bleak. The interpretation of the book, due to the uninterrupted allegorical symbolism with its drama of the struggle between the two opposites, good and evil, Christ and Antichrist and their opposing hosts is presented, is difficult, and demands a special 'wisdom' from the interpreter, as the seer himself warns. Beyond that of form, the obscurity is due to the impenetrable nature of divine decrees (Churches of seven seals), already mentioned by Jesus (Mark 11:25-27; John 16:12-13) and by Saint Paul (Rom. 11:33-36, I Cor. 2:4-16). The difficulties were minor for those addressed and for the early readers, who understood the various allusions to events and situations of the time and knew how to appreciate their biblical-prophetic symbolism. But not having preserved an exegetical tradition in this regard, up until the second century aberrant interpretations were formed such as milleniarism, based on the false Jewish conception of a temporal messianism. In Catholic exegesis, various schools of interpretation have been established, which still have their advocates today, although the progress of historical-philological studies is causing a gradual

return to the unity of the ancient commentators regarding the Eschatological theme and the recapitulation method." (28)

Whereas the Apocalypse is a mysterious book, whose exegesis is very complex, I cannot treat it thoroughly in this article. For those who would like to delve deeper into the matter, I would like to point out an article published in *Sodalitium* in 1999 regarding the interpretation by Professor Eugenio Corsini, reviewed by Father Ricossa, according to which the Apocalypse "*is rather the description of a coming, the coming of Jesus Christ: but not dealing with what will take place at the end of time, but rather of that which is actuated in the course of all of history, beginning at the creation of the world, and which has its culminating point in the great 'event' (Greek καιροσ) of the historical coming of Jesus Christ, above all by his death and resurrection. (...)"* In this, Corsini follows the "recapitulation" method, "*the only one, along with the eschatological, that can be called traditional. The Apocalypse does not present future events that follow one another chronologically, but offers, through different frameworks, which often repeat and develop previous ones, a prophetic vision of the perennial struggle between Christ and Satan, with the victory of the militant and triumphant Kingdom of God" (Spadafora); a victory, Corsini would specify, already essentially achieved and realized with His death and resurrection by the 'lamb slaughtered and standing upright' (=Christ dead and resurrected) that dominates the entire Apocalypse.*" (29)

Conclusion

The figure of Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist is very important for the formation of the primitive Church, and for the fulfillment of the Divine Revelation delivered in Sacred Scripture which concludes with him (the Apocalypse is the last book of the Bible). Having lived a very long life, he connects the early apostolic times with the subsequent period and also reflects on the changed situation of Christianity after the fall of Jerusalem and the birth of the first Christological heresies that he had to fight. His prerogative as the beloved Apostle of Our Lord and his unique doctrine, make him a master and doctor in the Church.

Dom Guéranger praises him thus: "Surrounded as he is by so much light, warmed by so much love, are we at all surprised that Saint John has become the adornment of the earth, the glory of the Church? Enumerate then, if you can, his titles, enumerate his qualities: Relative of Christ through Mary, Apostle, Virgin, Friend of the Bridegroom, Divine Eagle, holy Theologian, Doctor of Charity, son of Mary, he is also the Evangelist who left us the account of his Master and friend, the sacred writer of three Epistles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, Prophet for his mysterious Apocalypse, containing secrets of time and eternity." (30)

May the reading, studying and meditating on the Gospel of Saint John, on his Epistles and on the Apocalypse allow us to progress in the love of God and achieve eternal happiness by putting in practice his teaching: "*Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for charity is of God. And every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity. By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him.*" (1 John 4:7-9).

Footnotes

1) John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 10, 20.
2) Peter has always had a particular place in the Gospels and his name is always set apart. James, the brother of John, died before 44 a.d., at the hand of Agrippa before the fourth Gospel (nor any of the others) had been written.
3) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Catena aurea, glossa continua super evangelia*; in Joanne cap. 13 vv. 21-30. *Edizioni studio domenicano Bologna* 2016, Vol 7, p. 201.
4) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Commento al Vangelo di san Giovanni*, Città Nuova editrice Roma 1992, Vol. 3 pp. 57-58.
5) TEMISTOCLE MARINI, *I Santi e le Sante di tutto l'anno,* ed. Paoline Roma 1950, Vol. IV, pp. 657 658.
6) DOM PROSPER GUÉRANGER, L'anno liturgico, vol. I, edizioni Paoline Alba 1950, pp. 146-148.
7) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Catena aurea op. cit*., p. 203.
8) DOM GUÉRANGER, op. cit., p. 148.

9) TEMISTOCLE MARINI, *I Santi… op. cit.*, p. 658.
10) ST. AMBROSE cit. in THOMAS AQUINAS, *Catena aurea* op. cit., p. 466.
11) GIUSEPPE RICCIOTTI, *Vita di Gesù Cristo* (Oscar Mondadori 1997), §170-171. 42
12) The Roman Breviary says of him: "The Apostle John, one of the disciples of the Lord, and, as is said, the youngest of the Apostles, was a virgin when he embraced the faith of Christ, and remained a virgin; and therefore he was loved the more by the Lord, and rested on the breast of Jesus; and what Peter, who had had a wife, did not dare to ask, he had him ask; and after the resurrection, at the announcement of Mary Magdalene that the Lord had risen, they both ran to the tomb, but he arrived first; and finding themselves in the boat fishing in the lake of Gennesaret, while the Apostles, seeing Jesus, who was standing on the shore, did not recognize him, he alone, a virgin, recognized the virgin, and said to Peter: 'It is the Lord'.

John, then, was an Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet: an Apostle, because he wrote to the Churches as a teacher; an Evangelist, because he composed one of the Gospels, something that, excepting Matthew, none of the other Twelve Apostles did; a Prophet, because he saw (and wrote) on the island of Patmos, to which he had been banished by the Emperor Domitian for the testimony given to the Lord, the Apocalypse containing an infinite number of mysteries concerning the future. Tertullian then recounts that, thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil in Rome, he emerged purer and healthier than what had gone in. But his Gospel also differs greatly from the others. Matthew, almost speaking of a man, begins by writing thus: '*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham*' (Mt. 1:1); Luke from the priesthood of Zechariah; Mark from the prophecy of Malachi and Isaiah. The first is portrayed symbolically as a man, because of this same genealogy; the second the figure of a calf, because of the priesthood; the third the figure of a lion, because of the voice that cries in the wilderness: '*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths*' (Mt. 1:3). Our John, however, flies high like an eagle, and reaches the Father himself, saying: '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*' (Jn. 1:1)."
13) His presence at Ephesus at that date has a special importance in demonstrating the authenticity of Saint John's writings. It is therefore useful to recall the main testimonies on which it is based.
14) *Enciclopedia Cattolica,* vol. VI, Città del Vaticano 1951: under *Giovanni Apostolo evangelista* column 497; where one can find all the quotes from the Fathers on his writings. The translations from the Latin are ours.
15) The **Legenda Aurea** (Legenda - a key or table - is often Italianized through assonance to **Leggenda** - a legend - with a clear shift in meaning) is a non-historical medieval collection of hagiographic biographies composed in Latin by Jacopo da Varazze (or da Varagine), a Dominican friar and Bishop of Genoa. It was compiled from around 1260 to the author's death in 1298.
16) DOM PROSPER GUÉRANGER, *L'Année liturgique, le Temps Pascal*, Tome II p. 526. Houdin Paris 1908.
17) Pontificia Commissione Biblica: Autore e verità storica del Quarto Vangelo 29/05/1907. (Author and historical veracity of the fourth Gospel 05/27/1907) Here is the complete text: "First Dubbio. From the constant, universal and solemn tradition of the Church, in force since the second century which is drawn from above all: a) from the testimonies and allusions of the Holy Fathers, ecclesiastical writers and even the heretics themselves, which, having been derived from the disciples or first successors of the apostles, establish a necessary connection with the very origin of the book; b) from the name of the author of the fourth Gospel, universally and always accepted in the canon and in the lists of the Sacred Books; c) from the very ancient manuscripts, codices, and versions in various languages of the Sacred Books themselves; d) from the public, liturgical use maintained since the very beginning of the Church throughout the world; regardless of theological argument, can a sufficiently solid argument demonstrate that the Apostle John, and no one else, should be recognized as the author of the fourth Gospel, so that the arguments put forward to the contrary by critics do not weaken this tradition at all? Response: Yes."
EB 187-189, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19070529_quarto-evangelio_it.html
18) The Muratorian Fragment (from the name of its discoverer, the historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori) is an ancient list of books known as canons of the New Testament. Muratori discovered it in 1740 in an 8th century manuscript from Bobbio at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana and is dated to around 170 AD. It is written in Latin, probably a translation from Greek.
19) *Dizionario Biblico*, edited by FRANCESCO SPADAFORA, under *Giovanni*, ed. Studium Roma 1963.
20) *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, *op. cit.*, col. 502.
21) MARCO SALES, O.P. *La sacra Bibbia commentata. Il Nuovo Testamento Vol. I. I quattro Vangeli – Gli Atti degli Apostoli*, Licet Torino 1928, p. 334.
22) MARCO SALES, O.P. *La sacra Bibbia ... op. cit.*, p. 337.
23) *La sacra Bibbia, Il Nuovo Testamento tradotta dai testi originali e commentata, a cura di SALVATORE GAROFALO*, Marietti Casale Monferrato 1960, vol. III, pp. 211-212.
24) GIUSEPPE RICCIOTTI, *Vita di Gesù Cristo*, §167-168.
25) During this past Holy Week, in this regard, I listened to a program in French which was recommended to me, on the significant relics of the Passion of Christ: *La science à l'appui de la foi ? En quête d'esprit* (Broadcast on 04/13/2025 - CNEWS) https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x9htnlw
26) See my article: *La resurrezione di Gesù tra Fede e ragione* in *Sodalitium* n. 70-71 p. 7.
27) See SALVATORE GAROFALO, *Il Nuovo Testamento, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 747.
28) See SALVATORE GAROFALO, *Il Nuovo Testa mento, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 764.
29) FRANCESCO RICOSSA, *L'Apocalisse secondo Corsini*, in *Sodalitium n*. 49, Aprile 1999, pp. 52-67.

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

We continue the chronicle of the statements made by the purely material occupants of the See of Peter. They demonstrate that they don't have the objective intention of carrying out the good of the Church, something they profess in words, but not in deeds, since (at least) 1965. This review mainly covers the period since the last issue of Sodalitium (April 2024).

Although one might be tempted to be scandalized by J. M. Bergoglio's "teachings" alone, and not by the far distant K. Wojtyla, the intellectual J. Ratzinger, and the prudent R. F. Prevost, let us remember that all of them have followed, in different ways, according to their personality and formation, a practice already solidified by the work and the silence of Vatican II and of their own predecessors: this applies to religious freedom, ecumenism, "mercy-ism", sacramental practice, the teaching on morality.

• Evolution of the Faith

We have previously written in *Sodalitium* about the modernist conception of "faith". [(1)] Francis continued along this same path, with ever more incredible statements: here is how he speaks of the rejection of the anti-Trinitarian heresy of Arius in the 4th Century Church: "*It was a heresy that drove the Church to clarify its faith* [it is true, heresies can be **the occasion to deepen and explain** the faith, just as pathology is the occasion to better understand health, Ed.] *When this process began - with Saint Athanasius in the fourth century - **it was precisely the experience** the Church had of the sanctifying and divinizing action of the Holy Spirit that **led her to the certainty of the full divinity of the Holy Spirit"*** (General Audience 10/16/2024). Therefore, the Church would have ignored for three centuries the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and thereby the principle mystery of the Revelation, which is the Trinity! And it would have come to this through religious experience, *"to which experience, dogmatism does damage (...) dogmatism generates monsters, while on the contrary Christianity is an experience*" (interview with *Canal Orbe 21* on 12/20/2024).

• Syncretism

The erroneous Wojtilian doctrine that the "seeds of the Word are scattered in all religions" (see the comments in *Sodalitium* n. 48 pp. 39-41) was integrated and exceeded by J. M. Bergoglio with the following statement:

"*God is one: our cultures have taught us to call him by different names, and to find him in other ways, but he is the same father of all of us. He is one. **And all religions, all cultures, look to the one God with differing modalities***" (Francis meeting with prisoners at Verona on 05/18/24). "[*Religious traditions*] *share the search for God and His will*" echoed Robert F. Prevost (05/19/25).

God would therefore be "shared" among religions, as the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Ætate* (10/28/1965) previously suggested. So often we hear it said: "In the end we all have the same God" [(2)]: these words must obviously be interpreted, starting from this question: what is meant by the term "God"?

"God" is an *analogic* term, that is, it can have different meanings. Saint Thomas (1,13,10) explains:

1. *One can use the term "God" to indicate the true God*: when a Catholic says "all religions believe in God", they do not mean by the name "God" this first meaning, as if all religions believe in the one true God: in fact:

2. *One can also use the term "God" to form the concept of a presumed god. When we call an idol "god", by the term "God" we mean to signify something that is held by some men as being God:* and thus when a Catholic says "all religions believe in God", they therefore imply that only one of these religions is true,

Catholicism, and there exists only one concept of God, that is, the Catholic one!

Nostra Ætate, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis, Leo XIV, in what sense do they intend this phrase they so often pronounced, "all religions believe in God"? Is it in the second sense, the one that implies that the "god" of the other religions is not the true God? Or in the first sense, thus identifying the one Triune and Incarnate God of Catholics with the god of the Jews, Muslims, Hindus…(if it were ever possible)?

To explain, then, the affirmation of the "unicity" of the God of all religions - which would simply be "different ways of looking at the one true God" (Francis) - nothing remains but the agnosticism and sentimentalism that constitute Modernism - condemned by Saint Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi* (September 8, 1907): "*Thus in fact the modernists say: in religious sentiment one must recognize a kind of intuition of the heart that puts man in contact with the very reality of God. (...) It is this experience which, when a person acquires it, makes him properly and truly a believer.*

How far off here we are from Catholic teaching! Similar ravings have already been loudly condemned by the Vatican Council [first]. *We shall see later how, with such theories added to the other errors already mentioned, the way is opened wide for atheism. Here it is well to note at once that, given this doctrine of experience united with the other doctrine of symbolism, every religion, even that of paganism, must be held to be true. What is there to prevent such experiences from being met within every religion? And with what right will Modernists deny the truth of an experience affirmed by a follower of Islam? With what right can they claim true experiences for Catholics alone? Indeed Modernists do not deny but actually admit, some confusedly, others in the most open manner, that all religions are true:*" (3) all of which come from the divine, revealing itself in the conscience of every man - and therefore in every religion; a hidden god that everyone seeks (but who remains only an option, as J. Ratzinger said), a subjective god, that is, a human god; a godless god, in short, atheism, as Saint Pius X and Pius XI prophesied in condemning, respectively, modernism and ecumenism…

Jorge Mario Bergoglio

Francis gave the most explicit form of the error described when he pronounced the following words to the participants of the Catholic Junior College in Singapore (09/13/2024): "*If you want to argue that 'my religion is more important than yours…' 'My religion is the true one, and yours is not true…' All this leads to destruction.* ***All religions are paths to God. They are - will use an analogy - like different languages, different idioms in order to arrive there. But God is God for everyone, we are all the children of God.*** *'But, my God is more important than yours!' Is this true?* ***No, there is only one God, and religions are like languages, paths to reach God.*** *Some Sikh, some Muslim, some Hindu, some Christian, but they are on different paths.*" And as a consequence, each must be free to "go to God" as they prefer. ***"Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion are the cornerstones of the entire edifice of human rights.*** *Nor is freedom of religion limited to the expression of worship; it also entails complete freedom in the matter of one's own beliefs and religious practice (see Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration Dignitatis Humanae, 3-4)*" (Francis to the XII Colloquium of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue 11/20/24). "[*This requires*] *full respect for religious freedom in every country, since religious experience is an essential dimension of the human person*" affirmed Leo XIV continuing

the 'magisterium' of his predecessors (in an audience with the Diplomatic Corps, 05/16/25).

• Ecumenism

Modernists view the human family as a "brotherhood" in which one must set aside that which divides men, only to consider that which unites them, particularly in religious matters where each person must follow his own conscience. In this brotherhood, the Modernist assigns a privileged place to other "Christian" religions: it is from this search for brotherhood with other "Christians" that the so-called **"ecumenical" movement** (from the Greek "*universal*") was born. Francis, repeating these concepts already "canonized" by his predecessors, established: ***"We all received the same Spirit,*** *and this is the foundation of our ecumenical journey"* (Second Vespers of 01/25/25). Prevost adds: *"By receiving the Lord's peace, and accepting his call, which includes being open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit,* ***all the followers of Jesus can immerse themselves in the radical newness of Christian faith and life"*** (Message on the Centenary of the Anabaptist movement, 05/29/25), following the principle established by the Second Vatican Council itself: ***"God has called together all those who look with faith to Jesus, the author of salvation and the principle of unity and of peace, and has established the Church"*** (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 9). Francis concludes: ***"Jesus Christ is the heart of ecumenism.*** *He is divine mercy incarnate, and* ***our ecumenical mission*** *is to testify to it*" (to the World Lutheran Federation, 06/20/24). A mission entrusted to all Christians, therefore. For example, **the development of Christian doctrine *"is the responsibility of all Christians, regardless of their Church***" (to the 17th Inter-Christian Symposium, 08/28/24), and not just to the Catholic Church, the unique depository of the Divine Word. On the contrary, even the other "churches" possess the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (to the Baptista Rom Mission, 12/12/24), and Christians around the world ***"profess the same faith and have the same responsibility to bear witness"*** (to the World Methodist Council, 12/16/24).

To face "common battles", to advance in practice so that "theory", which divides us, is increasingly sweetened: this is the Ratzingerian and Bergoglian doctrine of "gradualism", applied both to ecumenism and to morality. "*Among Christians there are many differences: this one is from this school, this one from another; this one is Protestant, that one…* ***The important thing is that these differences are reconciled, in the love of walking together****"* (General Audience, 10/16/24). "*On this journey of ecumenism, I am reminded of a beautiful comment made by Bishop Zizioulas. This Orthodox Bishop, a pioneer of ecumenism,* ***used to say that he knew the date of when Christians would unite: the day of the final judgment! But in the meantime, he said that we must walk together:*** *walk together, pray together and do charitable work together,* ***as we head toward that 'hyper-ecumenical' day of final judgment"*** (06/20/24). Considering that the ecumenical movement was condemned by Pope Pius XI, Francis is prophesying without knowing it… In fact, on the day of universal judgment, ecumenists certainly risk finding themselves united…but to the left of the judge…

• Religious Liberty

During the Angelus of 08/25/24, Francis defended the right to religious freedom, even among heretics and schismatics: "*So let those who want to pray be allowed to pray* ***in what they consider their Church. Please, let no Christian Church be abolished directly or indirectly. Churches are not to be touched!"***

• A New Label

Currents of thinking are more or less easily definable with a label, a term that synthesizes their

particularities: well known, for example, are the labels of Thomist or Scotist in philosophy and theology, in economics capitalist or Marxist, and so on. J.M. Bergoglio willingly follows this system and in a rather brusque manner; so that conservative Catholics, from the term "regressives" which he himself labeled, are now called "museum faithful". "*But fidelity requires motion, and fidelity often leads to taking risks.* ***'Museum fidelity' is not fidelity.*** *Go forward with the courage to discern and to risk, in search of God's will*" (Address to the International Conference "Man-Woman: Image of God", 03/01/24).

Now, as sedevacantists, we find that we too have a label!... or better, a nickname: **"*Sedevacantists are like mushrooms*** *that sprout up, people who interpret things in their own way; they are not evil, but sad; with sadness in my heart, I pity them*" (Interview with *Religión digital* of 03/13/24). But in spite of Bergoglio, with the joy of the one true faith in our hearts (which is not the Modernist one) we continue our battle against the enemies of the Church.

• Nestorianism again

In the last installment of this column (*Sodalitium* n. 75, p. 34) we highlighted the Nestorian concept that Francis and John Paul II expressed regarding the consciousness of Jesus Christ. Francis positioned himself on the same line as his predecessor, by even receiving "His Holiness", **the Patriarch of the Nestorian Assyrian Church** (11/09/24). Few remember that "Saint" John Paul II did much more than Francis by his signing the "Common Christological Declaration" of 11/11/1994 (we refer you to *Sodalitium* n. 40 pp. 47-48 for our comments on this fact); this Declaration paved the way for a dialogue between Nestorians and "Catholics" (Modernists) which gave birth to other scandals: if the Declaration of 1994 still prohibited *communicatio in sacris* (celebrating and participating in each other's ceremonies), in 2001 the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (its prefect was J. Ratzinger, the "pope" was K. Wojtila) declared the validity of the Nestorian Mass (in which, however…the very words of consecration are not present). Once a certain unity was established through the Eucharist possessed by both (for us, however, probably neither of them), it was cemented by highlighting the "conformity in sacramental doctrine and in the conception of the Church" (declarations of 2017 and 2022).

In short, the differences in faith between the two "churches" matter little (since the time of John Paul II, efforts have been underway to water them down); in the meantime, "we must move forward," J. M. Bergoglio loved to repeat, following in the footsteps of his predecessors and that of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (the Second Vatican Council document on ecumenism).

• Nestorianism, but not only that

Francis was very fond of the ancient heresies and their modern descendents. In the wake of the "ecumenism of blood" inaugurated by Paul VI and John Paul II, which we discussed in the last issue of *Sodalitium* (pp, 35-36), J. M. Bergoglio included Isaac of Nineveh in the Roman Martyrology (the list of saints in the Latin

The heretic, Nestorius

Church). Isaac of Nineveh, a monk belonging to the "**Eastern Syriac Church**" which rejects the Council of Ephesus, joins with Gregory of Narek, a member of the "**Armenian Apostolic Church**" which rejects the Council of Chalcedon, and which in 2015 Francis wanted included among the doctors of the Church. And so, the result of ecumenism is this: Nestorians become our "model saints", and Neophitists, our "doctors".

• ***"Enter ye through the narrow gate…"***

"... for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" Thus says Our Lord (Mt. VII:13-14).

Let's give the floor to J. M. Bergoglio, in his television interview with *Che tempo fa* (01/14/24): [4] "*This is not a dogma of faith, but my own personal view.* ***To me, I like to think of hell as empty.*** *It is a delight:* ***I hope that it is a reality.*** *But it is a delight.*" Is J. M. Bergoglio alone in this thinking?

The "mystic" Adrienne von Spyer (1902-1967) said of Jesus Christ, regarding his descent into hell, that he abolished hell. Bergoglio, together with Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Walter Kasper, Joseph Ratzinger (as a theologian, and also as "pope", in the Encyclical *Spe Salvi* of November 30, 2007), instead supports the teaching of Hans Urs von Balthasar (a close friend of Spyer), who stated that we should limit ourselves to *hoping* that hell is empty.

Does this statement, less radical than that of the converted Swiss seer, save Catholic doctrine? We must be clear. To hope that everyone is saved is our duty; but hoping for the salvation of all, assuming that this is possible or probable, is against the faith: "*Enter ye through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction,* ***and many there are who go in thereat;*** *while narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life,* ***and few there are that find it.***" (Mt. VII, 13-14) [5]

Instead, these are the words of Benedict XVI in the Encyclical *Spe Salve*: ***"Evildoers, in the end, do not sit at table at the eternal banquet alongside their victims without distinction, as though nothing had happened.*** (...) *With death, man's life-choices become definitive—his life stands before the Judge. His choices, which in the course of an entire life take on a certain shape, can have a variety of forms.*

There can be people who have totally destroyed their desire for truth and readiness to love. People for whom everything has become a lie, people who have lived for hatred and have suppressed all love within themselves. *(...) In such individuals, there would be nothing left to remedy, and the destruction of good would be irrevocable: this is what we mean by the word Hell.*

On the other hand there can be *people who are utterly pure, completely permeated by God, and thus fully open to their neighbours—people for whom communion with God even now gives direction to their entire being and whose journey towards God only brings to fulfilment what they already are.*

Yet we know from experience that neither case is normal in human existence. For the great majority of people—we may suppose—there remains in the depths of their being an ultimate interior openness to truth, to love, to God. *In the concrete choices of life, however, it is covered over by ever new compromises with evil—much filth covers purity, but the thirst for purity remains and it still constantly re-emerging from all that is base and it remains present in the soul. (...)* ***Indeed, it has already been burned away through Christ's Passion. At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves."*** So Benedict XVI assumes that the majority of men are saved, not all (which, then, would be contrary to the words of Jesus in the Gospel); but reading the reasoning that leads him to this conclusion, it is natural to ask why we should exclude anyone from salvation: we know from faith that a single mortal sin, indeed the mere privation of grace, is enough to deprive one of Paradise; yet, according to Benedict XVI, the

smallest "openness to truth, to love" is enough for salvation, and charity, grace, mortal sin would no longer be in play! In short, instead of "*spe salvi*" [salvation *through hope*], a more explicit title for this document would have been "omnes salvi" ["all are saved"]...

• More on confession: the resolution to sin no more

In the last issue of *Sodalitium* we have already spoken about the inaccuracies in the many "Bergoglian" statements on the sacrament of penance. In the audience on the 34th Annual Course on the Internal Forum (03/08/24), Bergoglio affirmed: ***"The resolution to sin no more*** *expresses the will of the penitent to no longer fall into the sin committed,* ***and allows for the important passage from attrition to contrition, from imperfect to perfect sorrow".*** He seems to believe that in attrition, or so-called "imperfect sorrow", the resolution to sin no more is not present: which is contrary to what the Council of Trent teaches: sorrow for sin, **which always includes** the resolution not to sin in the future, can be perfect (contrition), or imperfect (attrition). The former is sorrow for the sin of having offended God, the latter is sorrow for this sin of having merited His punishments. Both are sorrows, and both include the resolution to not sin again, and both are sufficient to obtain pardon in confession. Reciting the act of contrition, we strive to arouse both of these sorrows within us: "*O my God, I grieve and repent with all my heart for my sins,* ***because by sinning I deserve Thy just punishments*** [attrition]*, and most of all* ***because they offend thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love*** [contrition; then, in any case, both for attrition and for contrition, it follows:] ***"I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, never to offend Thee again, and to avoid the near occasion of sin…"***.

J. M. Bergoglio doesn't seem to be fond of attrition. Regarding the words in the act of contrition that express attrition ("*Because by sinning I have deserved Thy just punishments*"), he declared that "*I don't know if they are misleading, but* ***they are a literary expression:*** *'because by sinning I have deserved your punishments'. By sinning one deserves punishment; if a person does a bad thing, the judge puts him in prison, bad things must be punished;* ***but it is too harsh an expression, for the love of God, isn't it?*** *I prefer to say: 'because by sinning I have saddened your heart'.*" The last phrase refers back to contrition, and that is fine; but one can debate whether it is appropriate to dismiss attrition, which is in any case a good and supernatural sorrow, by qualifying its motives as a "literary expression" - that is, a cultured one - and as "too harsh"... "*The very fear of hell [attrition], which faith teaches in order to hinder sin, is in itself good and useful, as a supernatural gift and a movement inspired by God that predisposes one to the love of justice. (...)* ***it is necessary that fear enter first, through which charity may come: fear is medicine, charity is health*** *(St. Augustine)*", Pius VI, Constitution *Auctorem Fidei* of 08/28/1794, D.-S. 2625). That God is loving is certain; but God is also just. One thing does not exclude the other, and every quality of God does us good when we consider it with faith and put it into practice.

• More on confession: the integrity of confession

"*And in this regard, dear brother priests, I will dwell on something – I am addressing the priests, who are ministers of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please, forgive everything, forgive everything. And when people come to confess, do not go and enquire: 'But, how?', none of that. And if in that moment you are not capable of understanding, go forward, the Lord has understood. But please, do not torture the penitent. A great Cardinal, who was a penitentiary; he was quite conservative, but about penance, I heard him say, 'When a person comes to me and I feel that they find it difficult to say something, I say, 'I understand, move on'. I haven't understood, but He [the Lord] has understood'* ". Thus, Francis in his visit to Verona on 05/18/24.

"The Lord understood". But the Lord also commanded that every mortal sin be entirely reported to the tribunal of confession… The

confessor tortures the penitent if he puts forth useless questions, but the confessor carries out his duty of judge when with opportune questions help the good penitent to report **all** of the bad things he has done against the love of God (the species, the number, the circumstances of the mortal sin)! Here, the Council of Trent summarizes the topic: "*If any one saith, that, in the sacrament of Penance,* ***it is not necessary, of divine right, for the remission of sins, to confess all and singular the mortal sins*** *which after due and diligent previous meditation are remembered,...****as also the circumstances which change the species of a sin*** [that is, what renders it grave, or more grave]... *let him be anathema*" (session XIV, can. 7). In short, for Francis, confession becomes a kind of confidence, a human search for relief - which was condemned by the same Council of Trent! "*If any one saith that such confession is only useful to instruct and console the penitent, and that it was of old only observed in order to impose a canonical satisfaction… let him be anathema"* (ibid.).

Francis returns to this topic on 10/24/24 (audience to Vatican Penitentiaries): you should "*say 'I understand'; I understood nothing, but I understand; God understands and that is what is important [...] But please do not be a psychiatrist: the less you speak, the better. Listen, console and forgive. You are there to forgive! [...] When a confessor starts to ask… no, you are acting like a psychiatrist, stop, please. Let them feel mercy*." So the roles of doctor, judge, teacher, and father which the confessor is obliged to fulfill are instead thrown to the nettles, in favor of a listening-center confession... The church on the contrary teaches: "*Let the priest be discreet and cautious, and like an expert physician, let him pour wine and oil on the wounds of the sinner, diligently finding the circumstances of the sin and of the sinner, by which he will prudently know what the counsel and remedy should be*" (Fourth Lateran Council).

In short, to summarize the disconcerting concept of Francis regarding confession: "*Never deny absolution: pardon always*" (audience to Verbites, 06/28/24).

• Paul VI, a martyr?

Paul VI celebrates Mass in Italian for the first time

"*Paul VI! I have often wondered why this Pope should not be considered a martyr! Indeed, on December 15, 1969, on the occasion of the classic exchange of Christmas greetings with the College of Cardinals and the Roman Curia, Paul VI mentioned the fact that Vatican II had 'produced a state of attention, and, under certain aspects, a spiritual tension', including the crisis of many priests. In that context he said: 'This is our crown of thorns.'*" (J. M. Bergoglio in the preface to MARCELLO SEMERARO, *Paolo VI, Dottore del mistero di Cristo*, LEV 2024)

Paul VI, a martyr. A martyr is a witness to the faith, a victim to the point of self-sacrifice. Considering that Paul VI is the primary person responsible for the documents of Vatican II, of the liturgical reform, of the post-conciliar practices, and therefore of the disasters that followed, one might wonder if instead he might be called a martyr as a *witness* to modernism, and as a *victim*… at most… of himself… In addition to having made so many good people, faithful to tradition, suffer (we refer the interested reader to the article by Father Giugni in *Sodalitium* n. 73 pp. 4-50: *Costui non può esser santo* [*A Saint he cannot be…*])

• Limbo

Appearing on the program *Al cinema con*, on *Rai3* on February 1, 2025, the president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, Bishop Vincenzo Paglia presented the film, *Rapito*, which is about

the famous "Mortara case". We will not dwell on this feature film, which promotes a historical falsehood to the detriment of the Church (*Sodalitium* has already spoken about the Mortara case, for example in issues 44 and 59), but rather on the Monsignor's denigrating statements (he is the same one who in 2007 commissioned and directed the fresco on the counter-facade of the Terni Cathedral, full of blasphemous, erotic, homoerotic and grotesque images, with the declared goal of signifying "*the freedom that man has in this world and the next*"). To the interviewer's question regarding the baptism received by the Jewish child Edgardo Mortara in danger of death, Paglia answered: "*One must understand, that, at that time, the vision of the end of life was based on a religion of fear: a course understanding of the Christian faith, and, in some ways, incorrect.* ***Limbo is an invention, it does not exist.*** *Then there is the theme of salvation, paradise-hell:* ***it was thought that those who did not receive the sacrament went to hell. Today, all this is overcome.*****"**

Let's set aside the question of salvation through baptism of desire, that is, without the reception of baptism of water (though, in the context of religious freedom, we doubt that Bishop Paglia is referring to the possibility of being saved with baptism of desire). "Limbo does not exist." One cannot see how to reconcile this statement with the terrible truth that original sin has as its penalty, the privation of the vision of God. The child who dies without baptism still has original sin and therefore cannot go to heaven. He will not go to the hell of the damned, because he has no personal sins of his own that would condemn him; all that remains is limbo, a place where he does not suffer sadness like the damned, and participates in a certain peace.

Is Bishop Paglia innovating? Only by taking one last logical step, following in the footsteps of the *International Theological Commission* which downgraded limbo from the status of truth to that of a simple "hypothesis", and immediately thereafter, to that of a doctrine "contrary to hope and strong reasons" (all approved by Benedict XVI in his audience of October 5, 2007).

• Francis "rehabilitates" hell! (and denigrates a predecessor)

…He rehabilitates hell, but only for the "enemies" of the Jesuits, and only as a "temporary hell". The evil-doer is Clement XIV (1769-1774), the pope who suppressed the Society of Jesus in 1773; his confessor and secretary was the Franciscan Innocenzo Buontempi. If Buontempi indeed had intrigues with Spain, and some influence on the Pope in his suppression of the Jesuits (both of which are very doubtful and disputed by historians), it is certain that the good of the Church and of the Society itself was the main reason for the Brief of Suppression of the Jesuits, *Dominus ac Redemptor* (and Buontempi was not the Pope's only advisor: but Saint Paul of the Cross cannot be put into hell, obviously). In any case, here are Francis's words, to the audience of Vatican Penitentiaries:

"*I am happy to meet you on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the entrustment to the Minor Conventual Friars of the ministry of Confessions in Saint Peter's Basilica (cf. Clement XIV, Motu proprio Miserator Dominus, August 10, 1774).* ***Clement did this, perhaps one of the good things he did. But, poor man, the other things he did were inspired by that friar of yours, Buontempi, whom I believe is still in hell, but I am not sure*** [then, is it possible to get out? Ed.]. *When Clement XIV died, Buontempi sought refuge at the Embassy of Spain, because he was afraid. This is historic, because he had deceived Pope Ganganelli with all these things* [if we want to believe the Society's monopoly in historical works, Ed.]" (October 24, 2024).

• Tell me your friends…

Citing an author does not necessarily mean integrally accepting his thinking; and a single quote might be true in itself. Having said this, the authors whom J. M. Bergoglio cites on occasion in his public statements are comprised of a very

strange bunch: on a number of occasions he cited Léon Bloy, a worshiper of Lucifer (Benedict XVI had also previously cited him); then Jacques Maritain, liberal philosopher and modern "Judaizer Christian" (February 7, 2025); Charles Péguy, an anticlerical and antidogmatic "catholic" (October 3, 2021) [6]; Franz Kafka, Jewish surrealist writer (January 19, 2024); Italo Calvino, laicist, son and grandson of Freemasons (December 6, 2016, June 15, 2022); Martin Luther King, Baptist pastor, he too the son and grandson of Freemasons (May 11, 2024, January 24, 2025); Stephen Hawking, a declaredly atheist scientist (June 22, 2024); Marcel Proust, apostate writer (July 17, 2024); he then recommended the writings of the anticatholic Fyodor Dostoevski (May 27, 2023, October 24, 2024); and he cited on many occasions Romano Guardini, liturgist, modernist since the time of Saint Pius X (as did Benedict XVI, a disciple of Guardini); and finally Monsignor Hugh Benson, of dubious association (September 23, 2023, March 2, 2024), and Gerard M. Hopkins, Uranian poet (February 16, 2025) [7].

Much more scandalous and influential on public opinion are his associations. We are referring to the visit, complete with praises and an interview, that Francis made to Emma Bonino (November 5, 2024), which is added to his visit to the (deceased) Giorgio Napolitano, and his correspondence with Eugenio Scalfari and Marco Pannella. If we are to judge a person by his friends, in addition to that life jacket given to him by the *ONG Mediterranea saving humans* (see the last *Sodalitium*), J. M. Bergoglio should be given a membership card to the *Partito Radicale*…

• Collegiality or Synodality?

A debate that arose in the Modernist sphere has aroused our attention. The topic is jurisdiction: its origin and its possessors. In *Sodalitium* we have already dealt with the origins of jurisdiction, in the particular case of a bishop, and in particular of the recent errors in this regard [8]; for this reason we will limit ourselves to summarizing the question. Everyone agrees in admitting that episcopal consecration confers the power of orders, that is, to sanctify. According to traditional doctrine, it also confers a quasi-requirement for jurisdiction, an aptitude to playing a government role in the Church [9]. However, the bishop can have jurisdiction, the power to govern, only through a canonical mission conferred by the Pope. Instead, Vatican II wanted to teach that episcopal consecration confers the office of teaching and governing (and therefore also jurisdiction), by way of the Holy Ghost and without the mediation of the Pope, thus making the Bishop enter by right into a phantom "episcopal college", that would hold supreme power in the Church.

The declared objective of the "zealots" at the Council: to rebalance the monarchical First Vatican Council; to de-monarchize the Church and reach out to the eastern schismatics; and to democratize it, reaching out to Protestantism.

And so, we come to the more recent facts that interest us. In recent times, especially within the framework of the "synodality" process ("*to increase everyone's participation and co-responsibility*", according to the words of J. M. Bergoglio), we are witnessing an increasingly marked and frequent phenomenon: the appointment by the conciliar "popes" and especially J. M. Bergoglio, of lay people and even women to ecclesiastical assignments. In addition to appointments to positions that do not confer a true governing power (such as Pontifical Academies, or secretariat positions), there are appointments to the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and Ecclesiastical Tribunals, which, on the other hand, imply possession of jurisdiction [10]. And this phenomenon is not happening only in practice, but has been elevated to doctrine: in fact, the Apostolic Constitution for the reform of the

Cardinal Ghirlanda together with Cardinal Semeraro and Bishop Mellino (left to right)

Roman Curia, *Prædicate Evangelium* of March 19, 2022, declares in n. II.5: "*Every Curial Institution carries out its mission* ***by virtue of the power received from the Roman Pontiff,*** *in whose name it operates with vicarious authority in the exercise of his primatial munus.* ***For this reason, any member of the faithful*** *can preside over a Dicastery or an Office, depending on the power of governance and the specific competence and function of the Dicastery or Office in question.*" The doctrine of this Constitution is as follows: appointment by the Pope is the sole source of jurisdiction, and therefore anyone appointed by the Pope can possess jurisdiction; this separates the power of orders from the power of jurisdiction… which, as we have seen, Vatican II wanted to make inseparable, while traditional doctrine holds that they come from two separate, and separable, sources! Why this 'step backwards'?

It is no mystery that, in canonical matters, Francis relied heavily on Gianfranco Ghirlanda, a Jesuit, an experienced canonist, then the rector of the Gregoriana, who was made a Cardinal in August 2022. Ghirlanda perfectly supports the second thesis, according to which power, in the Church, is derived from its "canonical mission" given by the Pope: which conforms to traditional doctrine…but this is precisely contrary to what was taught by the "dogmatic constitution" of Vatican II! [(11)]

For this reason, the cited paragraph from *Prædicate Evangelium* has raised the concerns of Cardinal Marc Ouellet and Alberto Melloni, and more recently it seems also Cardinal Beniamino Stella [(12)]: for them it is "*a Copernican revolution in the governance of the Church that would not be in continuity or even would go against the ecclesiological development of the Second Vatican Council*" [(13)]. As if Vatican II was in perfect continuity with the past…

But three considerations come to mind.

The first concerns the error that J. M. Bergoglio introduces with his Constitution *Prædicate Evangelium*. Although, as we have said and in a way that seems surprising at first glance, it teaches a truth: that the power to govern, in the Church, comes solely from the canonical mission given by the Pope (contrary to what is said by Vatican II). But alongside this truth, there is an error: this canonical mission could also be given (indiscriminately) to a lay person. On what basis? Cardinal Ghirlanda tells us: thanks to the "capacity to hold offices", which everyone received in baptism and which can be actualized by the canonical mission (while clerics would receive the "ability for such offices" in ordination).

The Church, however, has always, at a minimum, followed the practice according to which the power of governance is entrusted solely to clerics, and not to the laity; and this in accordance with the practice of Christ himself, who instituted clerics in the Church, who, unlike the other faithful, were destined for governing the Church. This conforms to the need for hierarchical organization, which Christ gave to the Church. The requirement of being a cleric to have jurisdiction in the Church is of ecclesiastical and not divine origin, and the Pope could grant jurisdiction to a lay person, but it must be clarified, as from the Sacred Congregation of the Council and Benedict XV: "*The laity have no jurisdiction; indeed, they are incapable of it, and this incapacity can be removed by the Supreme Pontiff only with a special and extraordinary provision, and for a single circumstance. (...The opposite would be) subverting the order ot ecclesiastical hierarchy*" (AAS-11-1919,129). The reasons are those already explained above. In short, if the possibility exists that some kind of jurisdiction could be entrusted to the laity (a thing that must be categorically excluded from the sacramental jurisdiction of confession), we can see this possibility as a little window in the "wall" that Christ erected between the clerics and the laity in the Church; a little window that the Church, in two thousand years, has never used, if not perhaps in the rarest of cases, and which certainly have never been used generally [(14)]. With Vatican II, if this little window was opened (under Paul VI, as we will see), and widened (by Francis); when will the wall be demolished, with a complete "democratization of the Church"? In fact, Congregations or Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, whose leadership is under Francis open to the laity,

act with jurisdiction, in the name of, and with the authority of, the Pope; they enjoy judicial, legislative, and above all, administrative power; indeed, they are united in the figure of the "Apostolic See." [15] So…a lay person can have ordinary and external jurisdiction, in other words, habitual. In contrast, the Pio-Benedictine Code, reviving the constant legislation and the practice of the early Christians and of Christ himself, takes it for granted that those who are to assist the Pope in his immense duties are clerics - that is, people set apart from the rest of the faithful and appointed for the governance of the Church - and that only in exceptional circumstances can a lay person obtain jurisdiction for a specific, particular matter. If the course of action of the Synod on Synodality continues with Leo XIV, however, we can expect further "transformations": according to the synod, the laity must participate in the deliberation and the making of ecclesial decisions, and the number of lay ecclesiastical judges must increase (Final Document, n. 77) [16]. Naturally, the laity is also composed of *women*, because "*there is no objection to having women be granted roles in the guidance of the Church*" (*ibid.* n. 60): "*Transformations are necessary. Since they have been so easy for me up to now, the next one will be a woman as a prefect to a Dicastery*" (Francis in an interview with *Canal Orbe 21*). No sooner said than done: on January 6, 2025 Sister Simona Brambilla was appointed Prefect for the *Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life* and the *Society for Apostolic Life*: the sister has, therefore, governing power on all religious around the world, and she immediately began to file acts of jurisdiction (the first document came only four days after she was appointed in which she named two Papal Controllers for the vaguely conservative Institute of the Incarnate Word). To this sensational case is added the experiment in the Diocese of Mechelen-Brussels, where the mother of a family was appointed an "episcopal delegate" (January 1, 2024) and is cited in the canon of the Mass along with the Pope and the Archbishop. And in the diocese of Gurk-Klagenfurt, a "female theologian" was appointed Episcopal Vicar (March 1, 2025), a charge that entails possessing ordinary

Sister Simona Brambilla, whom Bergoglio appointed Prefect of the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life

jurisdiction (Canon 366 of the Pio-Benedictine Code, and 476 of the Wojtilian "Code").

Are these just the first steps? Let's continue our analysis.

The second consideration concerns a curious aspect of modernism: there are indeed some modernists (generally, *yesterday's progressives* who have become the *today's conservatives*; in our case the aforementioned Ouellet), who erect as an immutable pillar the modernism of yesterday in all its aspects, forgetting, however, that to be modernist is therefore to be, fundamentally, agnostic, immanentist, and evolutionist. "Evolutionists" are those who support the evolution of religious truth, according to the needs of man and his times. In the matter in which we are treating (power in the Church), the objective for the true modernist is the "**modernization**" of the Church. To reach this, the (true) modernist knows that collegiality - that is, the "**parliamentarization**" introduced by Vatican II, is only the first step, or a part of the whole - but it is not the goal, and much less so are its secondary aspects (in the case in question: the origin of the power of jurisdiction). In this, Bergoglio was much more practical and coherent compared to his critics. How many of them shouted "Pope Francis speaks of co-participation, but then centralizes power in his own hands!", but when this centralization is a tool to accelerate the process of democratization (giving ecclesiastical power to the laity as well), what's the problem? **Adaptation to modern man, an unending and fundamental goal of modernism, is thus assured,** although at the temporary or apparent

"Una cum" Mass with the woman appointed "episcopal delegate" of the diocese of Mechelen-Brussels, also named in the canon of the Mass…

expense of some secondary aspects of the evolutionary stages of modernist doctrine.

The third consideration concerns the doctrinal development achieved on this subject.

On the one hand, we have J. M. Bergoglio, who applied *Prædicate Evangelium* [17]. But it is the same J. M. Bergoglio who at the same time and in a certain way takes up, without therefore innovating anything, what had already been said by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on February 8, 1977 (quote by Ghirlanda): "*Dogmatically, the laity are excluded only from intrinsically hierarchical offices, whose capacity is linked to the reception of the sacrament of orders*." Democracy!

On the other hand, Cardinal Ouellet hypothesizes a conciliation between the two positions: episcopal consecration (or rather the sacrament of orders) would grant the authority of the Son, which includes spiritual power and a sort of "sacramental jurisdiction", while a canonical mandate would confer the authority of the Holy Ghost, with jurisdiction [18]; in short, a charismatic democratization that has an interesting similarity to the statement by the same J. M. Bergoglio: **"*Synodality is the way to translate the Trinitarian dynamic,*** *with which God, by means of Christ and the breath of the Holy Spirit, comes to meet humanity, translating it in attitudes of communion and in* ***processes of participation***" (Audience with the International Theological Commission, November 30, 2023).

Both points, however, as we have seen, are in contrast with the practical wisdom of the Church, and its divine institution whereby there is a distinction between clergy and laity. So, in conclusion: are we facing, with Ouellet's attempt, the development of a small pneumatic and democratic stage in Conciliar doctrine? Or is it simply that the theory (partly, traditional) of the Ghirlanda school is more useful today for the pragmatic Bergoglio, in the democratization of the Church, and is Ghirlanda (whether he is being nostalgic or stubborn in wanting to harmonize the pre- and post-Council) only an instrument for this purpose? Time will tell; the fact remains that, in any case, each of these options is a useful tool by the modernist group for their continued "evolution" into a non-monarchical, democratic, charismatic structure, and therefore, different from the Catholic Church. "*The Synodal way is putting into action that which the Council has taught on the Church as a Mystery and People of God*" (final document of the Synod October 26, 2024). At the start of this study we asked ourselves: *collegiality or synodality*? It seems as though the answer might be: collegiality and synodality, one does not exclude the other, as Leo XIV decreed at the time of his first speech to Cardinals (May 10, 2025). Instead, we, along with the Catholic Church, remain monarchical.

• Ecumenist behavior

A "theological locus" is a legitimate source for proofs and arguments which can be used in theological reasoning for deepening Revelation in an orthodox sense - and Father Guérard criticized many of his contemporary theologians, proponents of the *nouvelle théologie*, reminding them that a theological locus must be employed with great respect and fidelity. Theological loci include Scripture, Tradition, the teaching of the Popes, Councils, and the Fathers: what is contained, affirmed or denied therein is to be considered valid in theological argumentation; they are proofs, and apodictic proofs in the cases cited. The continued

and universal practice of the Church is also a theological locus: for example, prayer for the souls in Purgatory or devotion to one's Guardian Angel are in use everywhere *et ab immemorabili*: the fact that the Church has permitted them, even without saying anything explicit about them, and even if nothing about them is contained in the other aforementioned theological loci, is an argument in favor of the goodness of these practices, because the Church is assisted by God so as not to permit error against the faith or the perdition of souls.

Now, there should also be included among the theological loci the behavior of a Pope and of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as a whole, when this behavior implicitly concerns the good of the Church. A Pope in fact, as Pope, must want the good of the Church and want to procure it in any measure, **and he is assisted by the Holy Ghost to effectively procure it.** For example, the Popes could not habitually concern themselves with the regulation of marriage among Christians were it not a moral law established by God that marriage, as such, has a fundamentally religious aspect and is therefore within the competence of the Church. Likewise, for instance, if the Church permits the faithful to pray to the Saints and prays to them herself, it indicates that the Saints can know our prayers. These are not dogmas defined by the Church, but truths infallibly taught in practice.

On the other hand, if a Pope, for example, *systematically* renounced condemning errors against the faith that were threatening society, it would raise the question: if the Pope does not condemn them, are they then perhaps not errors at all, or is it just not so appropriate to condemn them? **Or,** if they are clearly dangerous errors: does this "Pope" truly want the good of the Church? [(19)]

J. M. Bergoglio said, clearly and correctly, that the behavior of the hierarchy in post-Vatican II is a "theological locus", that is, a source of valid argument on the faith. Here are his words from the audience to the *Members of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Participants to the annual visitation of young priests and monks from the Oriental Orthodox Churches* (January 26, 2024): *"These visits are invaluable, for they allow the 'dialogue of charity' to go hand in hand with the 'dialogue of truth' that your Commission pursues. From the earliest days of the Church, such visits, together with the exchange of letters, delegations and gifts, have been a sign and means of communion, as your Commission noted in its document, 'The Exercise of Communion in the Life of the Early Church and its Implications for our Search for Communion'.* ***These gestures, grounded in recognition of one Baptism, are not merely acts of courtesy or diplomacy, but have an ecclesial import and can be considered true theological loci.*** *As Saint John Paul II stated in his Encyclical Ut Unum Sint,* ***'acknowledging our brotherhood… is something much more than an act of ecumenical courtesy; it constitutes a basic ecclesiological statement'*** *(No. 42)."*

Ecumenism put into practice by those who should want the good of the Church should be a theological locus. Those who recognize Montini, Wojtila, Ratzinger, and Bergoglio as Pope should logically argue: they are Popes (therefore infallible teachers of the faith), now they favor ecumenism, therefore ecumenism is good and holy. Many conservatives deny the conclusion, thus distorting the premise! "They are Popes (but they can err in the teaching of the faith)"! But those who state that a Pope could constantly and publicly err, by his behavior or even worse by his teaching contrary to the faith, ignore both the role of the Pope and the concept of a theological locus.

Here is the correct reasoning: the behavior of the Pope (and even more, his teaching) is a theological locus, a source of faith. Now since Vatican II, those who appear to be Pope, act (and teach) against the faith; given that two theological loci cannot contradict each other, these people cannot give life to a true theological locus, they cannot be Popes!

Francis shows a better understanding of theology than many "papal fallibilists", critical of him and Vatican II, but who are incapable of bringing these criticisms to their logical conclusions. And above all, the much-execrated

Francis is more consistent than they are… There is none so blind as he who refuses to see.

• Formation in the life consecrated to God

"We are considering ***periods of interruption in the seminary program*** *to foster individual growth. It is good to welcome and evaluate these novelties, living them as opportunities for grace and service, recognizing God's presence in them,*" Bergoglio said during the audience with the archdiocesan seminary of Naples, February 16, 2024. The following May, he moved from theory to practice, stating emphatically: **"*The preparation of a good priest, of a good religious,*** *must be integral;* ***it must be developed starting from the seminary and the novitiate, in direct contact with the lives of other people. This is fundamental*****"** ("Video of the Holy Father with the intention of prayer for the month of May 2024").

When he spoke about the necessity for seminarians and young religious to have contact with the world outside the seminary and convent, J. M. Bergoglio was no innovator: already the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* of 1985, approved by John Paul II, ordered *"that more frequent contacts with the world be encouraged*" (n. 2 and then 42, 58); the encyclical *Vita consecrata* also by John Paul II on March 25, 1996 established the need for such contact during the entire period of formation (n. 67), and also that consecrated women "*participate in the formation of future priests and consecrated persons*" (n. 58). In addition to these statements, we then have the universal practice following Vatican II that specifically permits and encourages such continuous and non-supervised relations with the world.

If we are concerning ourselves with a topic that might seem secondary, it is because it is not secondary at all, and because the Church already has its own doctrine regarding it. We can summarize it this way: "*Until now, the Church has continually adjusted and perfected the norms for seminary formation, always fundamentally insisting on the specific organizational and formative originality of the seminary, with an* ***anti-worldly and super-worldy*** *imprint, and with a careful, though gradually moderated,* ***separation from the lay environment. A reversal of orientation in this regard, therefore, constitutes an opposition to the pedagogical wisdom of the Church.*** *If an update is to be carried out, it should be precisely along the lines of this ancient wisdom. Otherwise, there would follow (if one looks at things with true realism!)* ***a much greater danger of contamination from increasingly worldly, secularized, naturalistic, hedonistic and corrupt thought and custom*** [all aspects ignored by the afore-cited Wojtilian *Ratio fundamentalis*, Ed.]. *To doubt this greater danger would mean to ignore the fundamental human tendency, especially among the youth, to imitate the environment, to follow the majority, to walk the 'broad' road, which is precisely the path of the majority. In particular, the persevering integrity of the celibate will be made more difficult for the clergy in the current social context, which is saturated with sensuality and lacking protective shields, as confirmed by the numerous modern priestly abandonments* [a thing we are not to speak about today…]*, and as is also confirmed by the great thinning of the young ranks in seminaries and religious life.* ***Anti-worldliness requires a convinced youthful period of detachment from the world. The sacred character requires a training period in an intensely sacred environment. Only in this way can one have the sacred, priestly person - the apostle, the one sent by Jesus - and not just some propagandist!*****"** (20)

The above is based on the famous decree of the Council of Trent on Seminaries (23rd Session, Chapter 18) and on the constant teaching of Popes. It is enough to quote Pius XII: "*Young clerics, to be formed in the spiritual life and to priestly and religious perfection,* ***must be segregated from the secular tumult,*** *prior to being inserted into the struggle of life. They must also remain for a long time in the seminary or in the scholastic school to receive a diligent and accurate education,* ***learning little by little and with prudence to come into contact with the problems of our time*****"** (Encyclical *Sacra Virginitas* of March 25, 1954);

and Saint Pius X who is even more explicit in his Encyclical *Pieni l'animo* of July 28, 1906. It is very true that "*there is a need to gradually and with due prudence reduce the separation between the future priest and the people, so that he, after receiving Sacred Orders, will begin his ministry without feeling disoriented*" (Pius XII, Encyclical *Menti Nostræ* of September 23, 2950); but so as to be clear, for the Church, contact with the world on the part of seminarians, and even less for novices, is not at all always and unconditionally "fundamental" or "encouraged". It would irredeemably spoil their formation which must be entirely supernatural and chaste and therefore pure from any contrary influence, even the slightest. This contact, says Pius XII, must happen only in the optic and proximity of the apostolate - which certainly does not concern young seminarians, friars or nuns.

Pope Pius XII confided the fact that bishops ***"must not ignore the copious sources of rules and experiences that have enriched the Church throughout the centuries in this essential and delicate field of priestly formation"*** (Speech on August 19, 1958). And he exhorted thus: "*To you, Superiors, we entrust this select group of youthful, candid, and fervent souls, from whom you will be able to obtain everything, with the help of divine grace,* ***if, in turn, you allow yourselves to be guided by the teachings of the Church"*** (*ibid.*). Those same Shepherds to whom the Pope was addressing have unfortunately demonstrated that they weren't guided by the teachings and practices of the Church on such a delicate and important issue as the perfect formation of priests and religious, on whom the Christian life of the faithful, the holy sacrifice and divine praise is dependent. In a word, the good of the Church! Therefore by diminishing or not considering the dangers that corrupt a consecrated person, and encouraging these dangers throughout their formation, and by considering these dangers and having "positive value", these "shepherds" of today (and not Shepherds) add a new argument to their not wanting the objective good of the Church.

• So, what happens in seminaries?

• Continuing the update on the "examination of conscience"

The "sin against ecology" that we highlighted in the last issue of this column is no longer the only "new point for the examination of conscience." During the "penitential vigil" (October 1, 2024) that concluded the spiritual retreat of the participants of the Synod on Synodality, the following sins were "confessed", publicly and on behalf of all the baptized:

- sin against creation, against indigenous peoples, against migrants
- sin of using doctrine as stones to be thrown
- sin against inculturation
- sin against ecumenism
- sin against poverty
- sin against synodality (lack of listening, and lack of participation by all).

With one sentence, Francis was able to ridicule what the Church had done for 19 centuries in the formation of candidates to the priesthood: "*We can't train asinine priests who have never read Dostoevsky, for example.* ***Humanism is needed in priestly formation, not the study of philosophy and theology—those are just dried fruit.*** *A taste for literature must be instilled in both human and priestly formation, because it's part of humanism; scientificism alone isn't enough*" (interview with *Canal Orbe 21*).

• Organ donation

Organ donation always requires mutilation, and often it is necessary that the donor still be alive at the moment of removal. This deprives the donor of a vital organ, making the removal a homicide, and the donation, if voluntary, a suicide. Catholic doctrine teaches us that all these actions are illicit (see *Sodalitium* n. 12, and n. 49 p. 79). This is the Catholic doctrine that Francis denies (continuing thereby with his predecessors like John Paul II in *Evangelium vitæ*, see *Sodalitium* n. 42, p. 57). In his audience with the Italian Association for Organ

Donation on February 25, 2023, he in fact called the donation of organs "*social solidarity*" and the "*promotion of life*". It is the exact opposite!

• Large and small differences

"*It must be noted that this war [Israeli-Palestinian] has also produced divisive attitudes in world public opinion, which at times leads to forms of* ***anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism.*** *I can only reiterate what my predecessors have clearly stated on many occasions: the relationship that binds us to you [the Jews] is particular and singular, without ever obscuring, naturally, the relationship that the Church has with others and the commitment towards them too. The path that the Church has undertaken with you, the ancient people of the covenant,* ***rejects every form of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism,*** *unequivocally condemning manifestations of hatred towards Jews* ***and Judaism as a sin against God."***

Of all the questionable things contained in the letter J. M. Bergoglio sent "to the Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel" on February 3, 2024, the passage reported is the one that is doctrinally the most innovative and the most worrisome.

We are not talking about the condemnation of **anti-semitism:** we at *Sodalitium*, striving to be entirely faithful to the teaching of the Church, want to be the first to condemn all kinds of racism, not only toward semites, but also vice-versa, and even in any other direction: "*God has issued commandments whose value is independent of time and space, country and race. As God's sun shines on every human face, so His law* [which also includes justice and charity] *knows neither privilege nor exception*" (Pius XI, Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* of March 14, 1937).

No, what concerns us is the condemnation **of anti-Judaism,** which is much different from anti-Semitism; this latter, strictly speaking, concerns biology and genetics [21] and is immoral, while the former concerns Judaism, whether viewed from God's perspective - that is, the Old Covenant of the Old Testament, which is now fulfilled and superseded by the New Covenant (John Paul II would not agree) - or viewed from man's perspective - that is, as the religion developed by the Jews unfaithful to the Messias. This religion is steeped in a religious and social mentality contrary to Christianity and to society itself, a mentality that elevates "the law", codified in the book of the Talmud, and bloodline, above every other text and truth: "*by now, Judaism was not so much a religion, as a sect of people politically and civilly opposed to established society, pagan or christian: a sect upon which triumphant Talmudism imposed the religious conscience of hatred and exploitation against idolatrous or baptised 'gentiles'* " [22] [23]. It is the same Judaism that today with the rabbis of the Sanhedrin would want to establish an "international divine court" to judge according to the Noachide law and with jurisdiction over all men on earth. [24]

Here are the words of the Vicars of Christ regarding the effects that follow from this Judaic sectarianism:

"*The dispersed Jews have so far refused to understand that they must behave uprightly while being treated with humanity, and can live among the faithful without receiving serious offense. But behold, this perverse generation, while Christian piety agrees to cohabitate with them and welcomes them with a certain benevolence, has shown itself to be ungrateful and harmful, returning offense for favor, contempt for familiarity, and - in exchange for benefits - they render their hosts, as the popular proverbs go, by giving a mouse in the pear* [*a spoiled gift*]*, a snake in the bosom* [*betrayal of a gift*]*, and a mouse in the bosom.*" And together with purely material damage, there is also damage to the Christian faith: "*Furthermore, they invent a certain law or tradition which they call the Talmud and which they falsely claim was given by God. In this voluminous book, which is spread throughout the world and which they claim surpasses the text of the New and Old Testament, are supported for the most part countless odious abuses, blasphemies against Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His Most Blessed Mother; one can scarcely bear to hear or read them without the greatest shame and horror. In this blasphemous law or tradition are written the gravest curses and*

horrible imprecations that are daily pronounced against Christians by ungrateful and perfidious Jews. What more is there to say? We believe that these and all the other detestable offenses contained in the said profane law or tradition are the main reason why the aforementioned foolish and unfaithful people persist in their perfidy" (Clement IV to the Archbishop of Tarragona). A people who "*every day contrive new deceits thanks to their spreading among the people dangerous volumes and impious and absolutely abominable books , both those previously condemned and those recently written*" (Clement VIII, letter *Cum habræorum* of February 28, 1593). Furthermore, contact between Jews and Christians have also damaged the morality of the latter, again due to the influence of Talmudic teachings. The reader will understand why the Church, desirous to safeguard the faith and the common good, has always preached, from its perspective, not anti-Semitism, but anti-Judaism.

Would anti-Judaism be a sin against God, as Francis would like? On the contrary; as Catholics, we cannot admit another religion as true. As citizens, it is right to "*consider as an enemy any anti-christian, anti-patriotic, anti-family, anti-social sectarianism*" [(25)], especially if the work of this sectarianism has continued for a long time, and in the last two centuries and especially in recent times, it has become increasingly dominant and vehement.

Vatican II says the opposite. And thus again we ask ourselves: is J. M. Bergoglio the first to distinguish anti-semitism from anti-Judaism? And to condemn not just the former, but the latter as well? Absolutely not. Anti-Judaism had already been condemned, as quite distinctly from anti-Semitism, by Karol Wojtyla (May 22, 2004, see our comments in *Sodalitium* n. 46 pp. 33-34) and by Joseph Ratzinger (January 17, 2010), who defined it as a "plague", and that it is the duty of the bishop to be vigilant against it (*Directive to Bishops* of January 24, 2004). J. M. Bergoglio simply advanced it, applying its "principles" to say it is "a sin against God"; after all, if "*the Old Covenant has never been revoked*" (John Paul II on November 17, 1980)... The principles of this error then are found in the doctrine of religious experience (condemned by Saint Pius X), and in the Conciliar declaration *Nostra Ætate* on the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions [(26)]. After the steps taken by Roncalli to Bergoglio, we await further developments…

Note: this column had already been written when we read that Robert F. Prevost (Leo XIV) sent a letter notifying his election and his feelings to the president of the American Jewish Committee on the evening of his election (May 8), as well as to the Chief Rabbi of Rome.

Footnotes

1) For example in *Assisi 2011: Joseph Ratzinger and Agnosticism* in n. 66 p. 16; or in the column *Osservatore Romano* in n. 75 pp. 31-34.

2) We previously wrote about this assertion and on one of its causes in the article *La compagnia degli anelli* [*The Company of the Rings*], in *Sodalitium* n. 65 pp. 5-22.

3) It is on the basis of these principles that we can explain such inappropriate statements like that of J. M. Bergoglio to the artists of the world of comedy (June 14, 2024): "*Can we laugh at God? Of course we can, and this is not blasphemy, we can laugh, like when we play and joke around with those we love. Jewish wisdom and literary tradition is the master in this! It can be done,* ***but without offending the religious feelings of believers.***"

4) If a "talk show" is characterized by the caliber of personalities it hosts, Francis, by appearing repeatedly in it, has placed himself on par with the other special guests on *Che tempo fa*: Ilaria Salis, Bill Gates, Al Bano, Cecilia Sala, Roberto Burioni. In short, the 'Pope" has become a celebrity like all the others - and moreover like all the others who think in a certain way.

5) For brevity's sake we limit ourselves to this quotation and refer the reader to *Si può sperare la salvezza di tutti?* [*Can one hope that everyone is saved?*] in *Sodalitium* n. 27 pp. 39-49.

6) We have already talked about him in *Charles Péguy: un profeta dei tempi moderni?* [*Charles Péguy: a modern-day prophet?*] in *Sodalitium* n. 50 pp. 54-55.

7) Of these last ones, we have already spoken about in the article *La vergogna della tradizione* [*Tradition's shame*], in Sodalitium n. 69 pp. 28-51; and in the book *La vergogna del la tradizione*- https://www.sodalitiumshop.it/prodotto/la-vergogna-della-tradizione/

8) In the articles *Il Vescovo nel Vaticano II* [*Bishops of Vatican II*] and in *Il magistero della Chiesa. Dottrine a confronto* [*The Magisterium of the Church - Doctrines to Compare*], in *Sodalitium* n. 59 pp. 18-49; and *L'autorità del vescovo: viene tramite il Papa o i fedeli?* [*The Authority of the Bishop: does it come through the Pope or the Faithful?*] in *Sodalitium* n. 27 pp. 4-7.

9) The reader will find a study on the topic in DON FRANCESCO RICOSSA, *Le Consacrazioni Episcopali nella situazione attuale della Chiesa* [*Episcopal Consecration in the current situation of the Church*]; available on https://www.sodalitiumshop.it/prodotto/le-consacrazioni-episcopali-nella-situazione attuale-della-chiesa/

10) In his lecture to the Gregoriana University of May 22, 2017, then Monsignor, now Cardinal, Ghirlanda pointed out that the granting of jurisdiction to the laity was in fact already planned by the Constitution *Mitis iudex Dominus Iesus* of August 15, 2015, according to which, in a three-judge panel, the majority (composed of two of them) can decide on the marriage annulments. If such a majority is composed of two lay people, and the clerical judge is in the minority, the annulment is affirmatively decided. In this regard, in fact, what was said about the Roman Congregations is valid: "*Jurisdiction in the external forum indicates, in the common understanding among authors, certain specific relationships - either of extended direction, such as that which belongs to Roman Congregations and to Ordinaries, or of the coercive application of the rules of law, such as that exercised by the Officialis and the members of an ecclesiastical tribunal*" (RAOUL NAZ, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, Letouzey et Ané, Paris 1942; t. III col. 863).

But this practice has been around for a long time… With Paul VI's motu proprio *Causas matrimoniales* back in 1971 it was made possible for at least one of the judges to be a lay person.

• La Regalità sociale di Cristo

While this year marks the centenary of Pius XI's Encyclical *Quas Primas* on the Kingship of Jesus Christ and Society, a subject the Popes have taught so much about (*Sodalitium* has dedicated its 2025 Calendar to it, and we refer it to the reader for an exposition of the Church's doctrine), Cardinal Pietro Parolin, visiting Paris (January 15, 2025) declared: "***We [Catholics] are in perfect agreement on secularism***." Francis clarified: "***We are obviously speaking of a healthy secularism, which does not mix religion and politics, but distinguishes them for the good of both****, and which at the same time recognizes the essential role of religions in society, at the service of the common good*" (Audience with participants in the First Colloquium between the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congress of Leaders of Traditional and World Religions, April 4, 2024). "***The danger is when religion becomes state politics, and the religious is united with the political***" (interview with *Canal Orbe 21*).

11) To our thinking, the attempt by Ghirlanda and Bishop Mellino to harmonize *Lumen gentium* with Leo XIII and Pius XII is in vain (we followed the former in the above-cited lecture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOaNJT3XI7E See MARCO MELLINO, *Relazione introduttiva alla Riunione Interdicasteriale del 9 maggio 2022. La Curia Romana alla luce della Costituzione apostolica «Prædicate Evangelium»*, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 9, 2022. For our comments on the two doctrines, we refer the reader to the already cited article published in *Sodalitium* n. 59. And given but not granted that Ghirlanda's harmonization is possible; he himself recognizes that there is a great ambiguity in the text of *Lumen Gentium* and its *Preliminary Explanatory Note*, so much so as to give rise to numerous discussions. In *Sodalitium* n. 62 (pp. 34-50) we asked ourselves with regard to the teaching of *Lumen gentium*: "*How then can Vatican II escape from at least those theological censures that condemn those propositions that are badly expressed and ambiguous?*" , that is, what becomes of the intention that a Pope must have to clearly procure the good of the Church?

12) Sandro Magister gave them resonance on his blog *L'Espresso*, with the article *Due cardinali e uno storico accusano papa Francesco di tradire il Concilio*, [*Two Cardinals and one Historian accuse Pope Francis of Betraying the Council*] of August 27, 2022. The source of Stella's criticism, a Cardinal with a long diplomatic career, is an anonymous Cardinal who reported his criticisms to the newspapers *America* and *La Nacio* during the General Congregations in preparation for the conclave of May 2025.

13) Thus Ouellet in the article *La riforma della Curia romana nell'ambito dei fondamenti del diritto nella Chiesa* [*The reform of the Roman Curia in the context of the foundations of law in the Church*] (initial part of his essay of the same name) published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on July 20, 2020. Ouellet goes on to argue that this controversy (the power of jurisdiction from the Pope – the power of jurisdiction from consecration) has never been resolved: the reason for his concern is then based on "*the effort of the Second Vatican Council to explicitly root the powers of sanctifying, teaching, and governing in the power of orders, leaving open to expert discussion the question of the basis of the distinction and unity of the power of orders and jurisdiction*", while Ghirlanda's school of thought "*would not integrate the progresses of the Second Vatican Council*".

14) Side note: At least, jurisdiction is impossible for women (at least ordinary jurisdiction; some authors have doubts about delegated jurisdiction); if, over the centuries, some abbess enjoyed a certain power, it has only been so-called "dominant power", similar but distinct from, and inferior, to the "power of governance": a power like that of a parent over his children, a master over his servant, but not like that of authority over his subjects. This is a topic that deserves further study.

15) Saint Pius X, in his Apostolic Constitution *Sapienti consilio* of June 29, 1908, speaks about the jurisdiction of the Roman Congregation.

16) The *Note of the Holy Father Francis to accompany the final Document of the 16th Ordinary*

General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of Holy Father Francis of November 24, 2024 (the final document was of October 26, 2024) informs us that: "*The Final Document will form part of the ordinary Magisterium of the Successor of Peter (cf. EC 18 § 1; CCC 892), and as such I ask that it be accepted*."

17) For example, to adapt the structure of *Opus Dei* to it, he established that "*While fully respecting the nature of the specific charism described in the above-mentioned Apostolic Constitution, it is intended to strengthen the conviction that, for the protection of the particular gift of the Spirit,* ***a form of governance based on charism more than on hierarchical authority*** *is needed. Therefore, the Prelate [of Opus Dei] shall not be honoured with the episcopal order*" (Motu proprio *Ad charisma tuendum* of July 14, 2022). "*Nothing prevents a woman from leading a dicastery where a layperson can be prefect. If it is a sacramental dicastery, it must be presided over by a priest or a bishop. Although there is some debate as to whether authority comes from the mission, as Cardinal Ouellet maintains, or from the sacrament, as Rouco Varela maintains, it is a fine debate among cardinals, a question that theologians continue to debate*" (in an interview on December 13, 2022 with Julián Quirós and Javier Martínez-Brocal for the Spanish newspaper *ABC*). He is therefore affirming that a canonical mission, if it does not involve the power of orders ("sacramental"), is sufficient for one to preside over a dicastery, as Bishop Mellino also explained in the document previously cited: "*Can. 129 § 1 clarifies that* ***'those who are invested with sacred orders are capable of the power of governance (...)', and in § 2 adds that the lay faithful 'can cooperate'*** *('cooperari possunt') in the exercise of such power. To cooperate properly means to work together with another. In this cooperation, each person contributes their own part in accomplishing the same work. To cooperate in the exercise of governing power therefore means to exercise the same power as the person with whom one cooperates. This presupposes that whoever cooperates in the exercise of governing power has* ***that same power. Therefore, the Latin expression 'cooperari possunt' has the same meaning as 'partem habere possunt.'*** *Canon 274 § 1 establishes that 'only clerics can hold offices whose exercise requires the power of orders or the power of ecclesiastical governance.'* ***The norm, therefore, does not deny the ability of lay people to hold the power of governance, but limits it to offices that require neither the power of orders nor the power of ecclesiastical governance.*** *The criterion for determining which dicasteries and/or bodies of the Roman Curia can be presided over by a lay member of the faithful is thus clarified."*

18) Thus, in the article cited in note 13: "*While preserving the principle of the unity and distinction of the two powers that are inseparable for the exercise of the ordained ministry at every level, it would be necessary to recognize a power of authoritative communion as a service, which does not proceed from the sacrament of Orders as such, but from the freedom of the Holy Spirit. In other words, one should recognize, alongside and in addition to the power of Orders, the authority of the charisms that have their own weight in the communion and mission of the Church. To state this principle means to acknowledge more precisely that the Father governs in his saving plan through the two divine missions of the Word and the Spirit. This other power of governance, charismatic, is exercised not only by virtue of the Authority of the Father and the Son through the sacrament of Baptism and Orders (Sacra Potestas), but specifically by virtue of the Authority of the Spirit. (...) The power of Orders embodies the paternal authority of Christ in the Church, an authority that generates sacramental life, thus structuring the community and referring all its members to obedience to the Father, from whom all paternity takes its name. The power of jurisdiction embodies the authority of the Holy Spirit*." In short, it would be a jurisdiction divided between the hierarchy (the power of Orders cannot be separated from jurisdiction, says *Lumen Gentium*) and charismatic impulses (thus justifying the power of a 'canonical mission').

19) The case of Pope Honorius, if it even were a betrayal as presented by some historians (very few, in reality) would not be a theological locus, since it was not systematic behavior, but a single act. "*That authority* ***subsists,*** *in conformity with its essence, does not entail a 'more or less'. (... While) that Authority* ***'realizes'*** *the 'Relationship' it maintains with the Good-End, does entail a 'more or less'. 'More or less' must evidently be understood in a broad, qualitative sense, and not merely in terms of the increase and decrease proper to quantity. The persons who hold Authority have their talents and their shortcomings; they receive the Communication exercised by Christ 'more or less' adequately. The entire history of the Church testifies to this; it is useless to insist.(...) [But] Authority* ***would be nullified*** *if it did not have the* ***real, habitual*** *intention of realizing the Divine Good. But this purpose is sufficient, even if it realizes the Divine Good only imperfectly, more 'less' than 'more', considering what is sufficient.*" (M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Le Siège Apostolique est-il vacant?* in *Cahiers de Cassiciacum*, n. 1, Association Saint-Herménégilde, Nizza 1979).

20) PIER CARLO LANDUCCI, *Seminaristi e preti*, Edizioni Civiltà Brescia 1970, pp. 79-80.

21) Although throughout history, reprehensible anti-Semitic actions have been exaggerated reactions to activities that were otherwise purely Jewish. An in-depth analysis of the issue can be found in BERNARD LAZARE, *L'antisemitismo. Storia e cause*, CLS, Verrua Savoia 1999; ISRAEL SHAHAK, *Storia ebraica e giudaismo*, CLS, Verrua Savoia 1997.

22) UMBERTO BENIGNI, *Storia sociale della Chiesa,* CLS, Verrua Savoia 2017; vol. II t. I, p. 106. For a complete framework of Judaism during the time of Imperial Rome and in history, we refer you to the entire paragraph 4 of the chapter from which this quotation was taken.

23) On this difference, and against those who, still today, do not understand the difference between these two concepts and accuse integral Catholics of "anti-Semitism", the reader will find some historical elucidation in *Sodalitium* n. 74, pp. 9-10 and 106-108.

24) See https://israel365news.com/400368/sanhedrin-letter-to-tr

ump-you-have-been-elected-to-fulfill-a-heaavenly-mission/

25) *Romana*, Oct.-Nov. 1928, *Programma del l'Intesa Romana di Difesa Sociale,* point n. 10.

26) In *Sodalitium* we have abundantly analyzed, from a theoretical point of view, these fundamental errors; we highlight in particular *Il gran sinedrio in Vaticano per il XX del Concilio* [*The Great Sanhedrin in the Vatican for the 20th Anniversary of the Council*], in n. 2; and *Il problema ebraico* [*The Jewish Problem*], in n. 26.

Bethlehem, the (ex) Christian Stronghold of Palestine

Father Ugo Carandino

In Bethlehem there is only one Mosque surrounded by dozens of Christian buildings, among them Churches, convents, schools, hospitals and other institutes of various kinds. Moreover, of the eight historical quarters of the city, only one is Muslim: this is because on the eve of 1948, 85% of the Palestinian population was Christian, an overwhelming majority that consolidated over the centuries. The 1933 census, under the British Mandate, listed 5,778 Christians out of a total 6,200 inhabitants, with 420 Muslims and 2 Jews.

To speak of the Davidic City of Bethlehem obviously means to speak of the birthplace of Jesus Christ, with all that connects it to the events narrated in the Gospel, the uninterrupted memory of the Nativity, the construction of the Basilica of Constantine and Saint Helena, and the pilgrimages over the centuries.

Authors who have written about Bethlehem have obviously focused on these fundamental aspects, which have made the city beloved throughout the world. There is, however, another aspect, little discussed, linked to the urban development of this small village and the role that the baptized have had over the centuries, despite the succession of Muslim dominations.

A text on the study of the urban planning and the social fabric of Bethlehem, both characterized by the city's Christian nature, is the book "*Betlemme. 2000 anni di storia*" ["*Bethlehem. 2000 Years of History*"] written in 2000 by the diplomat Yves Teyssier d'Orfeuil published by the Vatican Publishing House.

> "While the entire world can understand Israel's longing for the Wailing Wall, it is, however, rather curious about their desire to incorporate Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, within the borders of Jerusalem [read: of the Israeli State]" King Hussein of Jordan, 1967

Anyone who has the patience to read these lines to the end, will understand that what might be considered a niche topic actually concerns an extremely important aspect of the Holy Land: the profoundly Christian nature of Bethlehem, which was formed and consolidated over the centuries, and which is placed in grave danger from the events of the recent decades.

In the first chapter of the book, the author deals with the usual and foundational themes tied to Bethlehem: Bethlehem in the Bible, Bethlehem cradle of Christianity and Bethlehem the destination of the first pilgrims.

It is from the fourth chapter that we approach the theme of the study, from the Muslim conquest to the period preceding the Crusades. The Christian presence in Bethlehem remains constant and predominant, despite the Islamization of Palestinian society. Historical data contradict the propaganda of those who claim that the Christians of the Holy Land are a legacy of the Crusades, denying the community's continuity of the existence over the centuries. The Muslim invasion was preceded by that of the Persians and, uniquely in all of Palestine, the Basilica in Bethlehem was spared from destruction, a fate that befell all other

The Grotto in Bethlehem from an old postcard

Constantinian basilicas. The Church of the Nativity was saved thanks to the iconography of the mosaics in which the Magi are depicted in Persian dress: a blessed superstition…

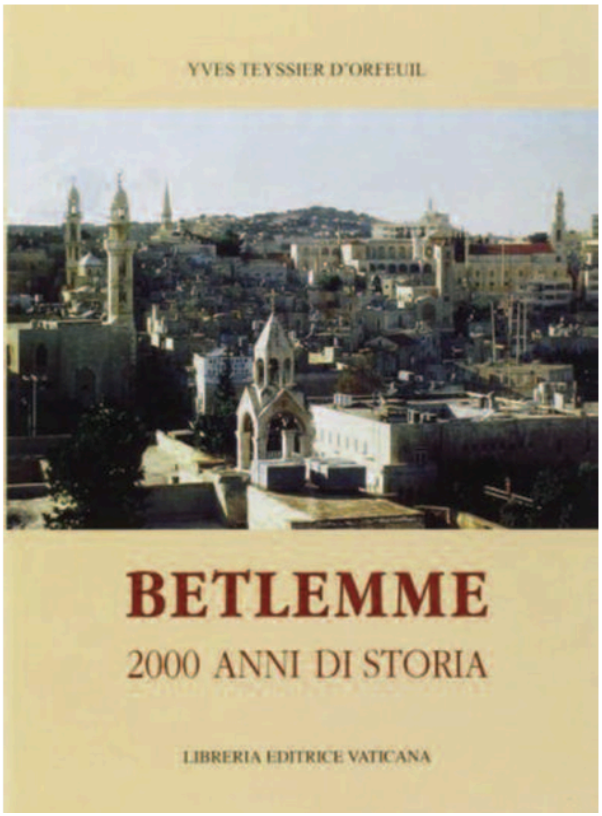
The anti-Roman alliance between the Israelites and the Sassanid dynasty led to Jewish rule in Jerusalem (614-619), and a bloodbath in which tens of thousands of Christians perished. The Jewish-Persian alliance brought Palestinian Christianity to its knees, which, a few years later, (in 638 in Jerusalem, perhaps as early as 634 in Bethlehem), was unable to withstand the Muslim shockwave. According to contemporary accounts, a special relationship was established in Bethlehem in the early days of Islamic occupation, due to a certain respect for the site linked to the birth of Jesus and the motherhood of Mary (even today, the Church of the Milk Grotto is a place of prayer for Muslim women as well). The fact is that at least in that blessed corner of the earth, the first steps of the new religion, influenced by Talmudic and Nestorian influences and tribal superstition, allowed the Christian community to remain dominant.

Under the Empire of Charlemagne (p. 74) the Emperor and the Caliphate of the time exchanged embassies, which determined a kind of Carolingian protectorate of the Overseas Territories , which continued in the 10th and 11th centuries. In 807, the first "Latin" monks (a term in the Holy Land that indicates Catholics of the Roman Rite) arrived in Bethlehem: during the celebration of Christmas in the Basilica of the Nativity, the first incident with the Greeks broke out, even though they were still united, at least juridically, with the Church of Rome. This incident served as a prototype for the countless attacks that the Catholic clergy and religious would suffer throughout the Holy Land over the centuries.

Arabs dynasties followed one another, yet a Persian visitor in 1047 "*described the hamlet as [still] populated by Christians*" (p. 78). Thus, even though these were difficult times when pilgrimages were declining, Bethlehem's Christian population retained a certain prestige. A thousand years after the birth of Christ, despite four centuries of Islamic occupation, Bethlehem remains Christian.

In this sense, the arrival of the Crusaders was providential, also in that they discouraged conversions caused by the "*fiscal inequality established between Muslims and non-Muslims*" (p. 80). The author expresses reservations about the impact of the Crusaders on Arab or even Christian society, but recognizes that "*the period of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem offered a place of primary importance to Bethlehem*' (p. 81). Bethlehem was conquered before Jerusalem, without a painful siege. The memory of the royal anointing of David in Bethlehem suggested choosing Bethlehem as the site for the first Latin kings to be crowned, which soon became a bishopric with a flourishing of monasteries. The city's fortifications also gave the basilica its imposing appearance, with four mighty towers. The Crusader period in Bethlehem was relatively short (1099-1187), but there was no shortage of marriages between "Franks" and the Bethlemite women (the author mentions there are current Palestinians with blue eyes), which reinvigorated the Christian community and assimilated a Frankish element to the indigenous one, prolonging its presence even after the fall of the Latin kingdoms. Moreover, the names of some Christian families in Bethlehem hark back to a Crusader origin (p. 91).

The fall of the Latin kings brought profound disruption to the Christian presence throughout Palestine, and the chroniclers of the era describe Bethlehem as an abandoned village. The



14th and 15th centuries were two very difficult ones, especially due to the exiling of bishops: the sheep were deprived of their shepherds. By Papal decree, the custody of the Holy Places and the dispersed flock were entrusted to the Franciscan Order, and in 1347 the friars settled permanently in Bethlehem (p. 99). The *custodial* mission led to the creation of the Custody of the Holy Land, then referred to as the Custody of the Overseas, the Franciscan province covering Palestine and numerous other territories in the Near East. One of its tasks was to promote pilgrimages to the Holy Places and thus assist pilgrims (throughout the centuries of Christianity, the greater Faith never stopped travel to the Holy Land). These pilgrims, then as now, were a source of great moral and material support for Bethlehem's Christians. Now, the Mamluk sultans were the new masters of Palestine, and the basilica "*is exploited and plundered*" (p. 100).

At the close of the 15th century, the Franciscans managed to preserve a good part of the Basilica's altars, and in particular the access and use of the Grotto of the Nativity (p. 100). The presence of the local baptized people persisted around the Basilica, the only ones interested in the religious events of the place and the beneficial impact of the pilgrims.

Chapter 7 deals with an epochal turning point: in December 1516, Palestine was conquered by the Turks and would become a part of the Ottoman Empire for four long centuries, until December 1917. "*The flow of pilgrims did not stop*" and "*for the Christian community it was a period of flourishing and development*" (p. 106).

The following entire paragraph deserves to be transcribed: "*Under the Mamluks, the village had fallen into a state of dormancy and by the 16th century had only a hundred inhabitants. Its urban regrowth began slowly but progressed steadily. Different neighborhoods gradually developed, and numerous pilgrims came to visit the Nativity. The industry of devotional objects began to take off and functioned well: olive crosses encrusted with small stones, rosaries, miniatures of the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica of the Nativity in wood or stone... Details about the city, the architecture of the basilica, and its inhabitants now present a more specific portrait of life in Bethlehem*" (p. 107).

In Jerusalem, the four quarters of the Old City reflect their different historical components: the Arab Christians, the Armenian Christians, the Jews and the Muslims. In Bethlehem too, the seven quarters that were formed at the start of the Ottoman domination reflect the present population, which in the meantime had grown, all of them assigned to Christian families; subsequently, an eighth quarter was created for the Muslim minority. Meanwhile, starting in 1534, the schismatic patriarch of Jerusalem hellenized the "Greek" clergy, the Arab element was progressively set aside (p. 108), and the relations with the Latins became increasingly difficult, resulting in physical attacks, even in the holy places, by the followers of Photios [the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, Ed.]. Numerous pages of Chapter 8 describe the continuous exchange of the use of the various altars in the basilica between the Latins and the Greeks, while in the town, conversions to the Catholic Church were increasing, thanks to the zeal of the Franciscan Fathers (in 1562, the entire Nestorian community

abjured their errors and professed and adhered to the Roman Church, p. 110). Unfortunately, Turkish benevolence toward the Greeks, who were able to curry favor with Ottoman power, was a disservice to justice: "*These places belong to my master the Sultan, who gives them to whomever he wishes. It may be that they have always been in the hands of the Franks (Latins), but today His Highness wishes them to be in the hands of the Greeks*" (letter from the Vizier to the French Ambassador, 1769, p. 115). The Greeks took advantage of the basilica's restoration in the 17th and 19th centuries to erase as many Latin inscriptions as possible, even to the detriment of the famous mosaics of the central nave. During these sad events, however, the good Christians of Bethlehem had the opportunity to attend services in the Franciscan church of Saint Catherine, built next to the basilica.

Urban growth and the characteristics of the homes in Bethlehem are described from p. 118, noting that current houses date back to the 16th century, constructed on the city's two hills. The principal activities were farming and craftsmanship: "*The most skilled of these make beautiful crosses and representations of the entire Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, but with such precision that not a pillar or a small column is missing… The work is more expensive than the material, because they are all made of wood with a few ornaments of mother-of-pearl, pearls, or white bone that imitates ivory… Our skilled turners in France would struggle to succeed better, despite their numerous tools*" (a pilgrim quoted in a 1914 text, p. 121).

The first decades of the 19th century were damaging for the Holy Land, and therefore for Bethlehem, due to the interference of England and Russia, the former favoring the modest Jewish communities and the beginning of Protestant infiltration, the latter supporting the already "exuberant" Greek schismatics. "*In reaction to the French protecting the Catholics and the Russians protecting the Orthodox, the English decided to support the Protestants and the Jews in the Holy Land. They did so in collaboration with German Lutherans*" (p. 130). The first counterfeit Bibles also reached Bethlehem. Also, due to the activities of non-catholics, Pope Pius IX took the opportunity to reestablish, after six centuries, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which included Bethlehem as well.

In 1847, the silver star with a Latin inscription placed on the site of Jesus' birth in 1717 was stolen by "unknown persons", to deny Latins the right to the sacred site. An international controversy erupted, reaching the court of Constantinople, with the intervention of the Catholic states in support of the Franciscans and of Russia in support of the... unknown persons. The case was part of the broader issue on the use of the Holy Sepulchre, the Tomb of the Virgin, and the Nativity in Bethlehem. An Ottoman commission then decreed a firman, still in force: the infamous "Status Quo" of 1852, which, based on the de facto rather than de jure ownership of the time, severely penalized the Latins. In this affair, schismatic Russia demonstrated its role as an anti-Roman and an anti-Latin power in the Holy Land (along with England). The case of the star, however, ends in favor of the Franciscans, who are able to place a copy of the star with the stolen Latin inscription in the Grotto of the Nativity, which is still present and still disliked by Greek and Russian dissidents.

Chapter nine discusses the missionary momentum fostered by a softening of attitudes toward the Christian presence in society, with the abolition of taxes on non-Muslims and, above all, for Christians to be allowed their own schools. With the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the anomalous situation of the Franciscans being the sole presence (albeit meritorious and heroic over the centuries, with hundreds of martyrs) ended, and numerous Catholic congregations opened houses, schools, and hospitals in Bethlehem. Development was rapid, the town's Christian nature was now more visible, and its influence on the education of new generations was strengthened: "*Most communities founded schools. This offered young Bethlemites an excellent level of formation, much superior to that of the other inhabitants in Palestine*" (p. 140),

similar to that of Jerusalem. The author summarizes the period with these considerations: "*Churches, convents, and hospitals with their buildings transform the urban landscape and give it a European touch. The new architecture, however, blends in fairly well with the rest of the city, thanks to the use of local stone*" (p. 140). The new Latin Patriarch, Archbishop Giuseppe Valperga, decided to open a seminary for the formation of diocesan clerics near Bethlehem at Beit Jala, where many families soon abandoned the schismatics and embraced the Catholic faith. Meanwhile, vocational schools were also opened, training "*shoemakers, carpenters, joiners, and sculptors of mother-of-pearl in olive wood*" (p. 141). In Cremisan, an agricultural school was opened in 1892 entrusted to the Salesians, which produces excellent wine to this day.

The presence of female congregations multiplied (Franciscan, Salesian, the Arab Sisters of the Rosary, etc) which afforded an excellent religious and professional formation for young Bethlehem girls.

It is a particularly happy moment for the Christians of Bethlehem, with a significant strengthening of the Catholic presence. The determination of the many generations of Christians in Bethlehem and the surrounding villages, like Beit Sahour and the already mentioned Beit Jala, who never abandoned the land of the Nativity despite centuries of Islamification, has been rewarded, and Bethlehem's Christian primacy has been strengthened.

Meanwhile the "status quo" imposed by Constantinople had not resolved the problems, and the Greeks continued their attempts to boycott the few privileges granted to the Latins in the Basilica of the Nativity. In May, 1869, the Grotto was even set on fire to remove all Latin insignia, and in 1873, the Latins were attacked during a service: the Greeks "*destroyed and removed everything Latin*" (p. 148) The usual diplomatic quarrel broke out, and in 1874 France donated asbestos cladding with Latin insignia to cover the walls of the Grotto, and the Ottomans decided to have a soldier stationed in the Basilica and another in the Grotto to prevent other incidents. If I am not mistaken, the presence of these soldiers continued throughout the British Mandate. Naturally the Greeks did not give up, and further incidents ensued. An amusing incident reported by the author: on January 6, 1905, Turkish soldiers prevented the Greeks from carrying out an incense burning at the Grotto, because it was not authorized by the "status quo"!

Extremely interesting is the section: "A new urban landscape" (p. 151) which describes the further urban development and its Christian influence: "*Bethlehem became, at the approach of 1914, an authentic bourgeois town, much favored by the numerous scholastic and hospital institutions…many are the bell towers that unfold before one's view*" (p. 151). This was the period in which the Franciscan Fathers also developed archeology with notable results.

On August 29, 1914, the Ottoman Empire declared war on the Allies. The war situation in Palestine, too, was unfavorable to the Turks, and in early December 1917, British troops (along with French troops and a detachment of Royal Carabinieri) advanced on Jerusalem. What seemed to be the prerequisite for the Christianization of the Holy Land, would instead be the beginning of the end of the Christian presence in Bethlehem and throughout Palestine.

Indeed, the outcome of the First World War signaled the gradual advent of Zionism across the British Mandate. In Bethlehem, the population was unprepared and clearly demonstrated their preference for a French mandate. At Christmas, 1917, the English threatened fines in Bethlehem against anyone who "brandished French flags" (p. 160). Meanwhile, the Anglican clergy followed the British troops and "*developed ecumenical relations with the important Greek Orthodox community*" (p. 161)

In 1917, the "Balfour Declaration" was issued, in which the government of London supported the creation of a Jewish "national home" in Palestine: the Zionist project, justified by document, rapidly advanced, with ever-increasing Jewish immigration causing strong tensions with

The Grotto in Bethlehem

the Arabs, both Muslim and Christian (15% of the Palestinian population). The French magazines of the Holy Land launched a heartfelt, yet unheard, cry of alarm.

The "troubled times", as the author calls them, had little to do with Bethlehem, since the Jews initially occupied mainly the coastal plain (in 1909, Tel Aviv was founded), Galilee and Jerusalem. Soon, though, even the Holy Place of the Nativity was overwhelmed by the outcome of events: the partition of Palestine, decided in 1948 by the UN, took place, with the birth of the State of Israel in 1948. Armed clashes between Zionist gangs and Arabs spread: the painful exodus of Palestinians began, starting with the wealthiest, including members of the Christian bourgeoisie, terrified by the violence and the abuse of their new masters.

"*For Palestinians, 1948 is the Nakbah: the year of catastrophe*" (p. 169), a catastrophe in which Christians are not spared. Numerous refugees, especially Muslims, fleeing the destroyed villages, flock to Bethlehem, both to the city and the district. On the eve of the 1948 war, the author notes, Bethlehem had 10,000 inhabitants, of whom 3,800 were Latins, 3,200 Greeks (Catholics and schismatics), a few Maronites, a few Armenian families, 250 Protestants, and 1,300 Muslims. After 1948, the population tripled in a short time and the element foreign to Christianity had the upper hand: "*Bethlehem, a Christian city for centuries, suddenly found itself with a majority of Muslims*" (p. 171), also because the exodus did not spare the Christian families of Bethlehem, some of whom fled abroad. A border was drawn between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, provoking difficult situations that would become dramatic in 1967.

The author explains that the Christian city, which rapidly found itself with a majority Muslim population, had a fair amount of Christian representation in the Jordanian parliament (which at that time governed part of Palestine) and the right (still in force) to elect a Christian mayor. These were laudable concessions, but they were not sufficient to reestablish the centuries-old primacy of Christians in Bethlehem, which had been shaken by Zionism. Refugee camps (mostly Muslim) were multiplying: "*From the end of December 1948 to the start of 1949 many Palestinians took refuge in Bethlehem because they were terrified by the massacres perpetrated in the countryside aimed at scaring the inhabitants away*" (p. 177). The Jordanian government neglected the university education of the Bethlehem residents, who were forced to attend universities in Amman, and were unable to continue their studies after 1967, furthering the causes for the exodus (p. 180).

The twelfth and final chapter, recounts the dramatic events that affected Bethlehem up until 2000 (the year the book was published) which has worsened further in the ensuing 25 years.

"*After the 1967 war…Bethlehem experiences the typical hardships of an occupied country… oppression, repression and expulsion become the daily reality*" (p. 181). "*Israeli military tanks are stationed in front of the Nativity and head towards the city. Cars equipped with loudspeakers drive around the city, urging residents to leave. 'You are given two hours to leave your homes and flee to Jericho or Amman; if you don't, your homes will be bombed'* " (p. 182, from the diary of a Bethlehem nun). The author goes on to explain how, unlike 1948, the 1967 Bethlehem residents consult with each other by telephone and take refuge in churches, determined not to leave. Some, instead, attempted to escape through the hills, and thirty of them were killed by

Zionist soldiers. It was not until 1995 that Israeli troops withdrew, the beginning of the administration by the Palestinian National Authority, with lights (a few) and shadows (many). Meanwhile, around Bethlehem and the nearby Christian towns of Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, the great expansion of illegal settlements began, with constant incidents caused by the settlers. This was followed by the intifada of 1987 and that of 2002, with the siege of the Church of the Nativity, which inspired a famous cartoon by Giorgio Forattini (with baby Jesus seeing a tank with the star of David and exclaiming: 'They don't want to kill me again, do they?!')

The rest is history…after Covid, pilgrimages had resumed in the best possible way, but on October 7, 2023, they came to an abrupt halt. Without work, and without any prospects of safety (law is systematically violated on the West Bank by the army and the settlers), countless families in and around Bethlehem have followed the path of their fellow citizens: forced exile, a path that began in 1948. A recent study by the "World Christian Council for Peace" (CCP) estimates that the Christian presence in Bethlehem will end by 2060: one should not be overly optimistic…

We have traced the history, over the centuries, of Bethlehem's Christian population, which remained the majority even during the darkest moments of Islamic rule. The advent of Zionism drastically reduced the number of Christian families, and the political plan of the current government in Tel Aviv is the annexation of the entire West Bank, including Bethlehem. The era in which Catholic states defended the interests of the Church, Christians, and pilgrims in the Holy Land, shielding them, wherever possible, from the oppression of Muslim power, is now over. Those states are now mired in apostasy, supporting the new masters of Palestine, who consider it blasphemous to recognize the divinity of Christ in the very land of Christ! What remains is the pain of all these tragedies and the indignation at the indifference accompanying the decline of the centuries-old Christian stronghold of Bethlehem.

The Grotto of the Nativity, around which Christian families settled over the centuries, almost as if to protect it from the infidels (of yesterday and today), deserves much more.

• Yves Teyssier d'Orfeuil
Betlemme. 2000 anni di storia
Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001.

Controversies

A Livornese in Nantes

Father Francesco Ricossa

Sodalitium (n. 75) has previously had the opportunity to speak about a priest of the Society of Saint Pius X, Father Daniele Di Sorco, in our brief review entitled: *Radio Spada and the Society are not "tranquil"* (pp. 73 ff.) Mea culpa: I admit having made a little fun of Father Di Sorco, describing him as "*a Livornese priest of the Society, previously trained with the bi-ritualist Franciscans Friars of the Immaculate*", raising the question of whether it was "*more dishonorable for Radio Spada to collaborate with the Society, or instead more shameful for the Society to collaborate with Radio Spada*." I can therefore understand why Father Daniele flew off the handle and decided to return the favor in a conference he held in Nantes, Brittany on March 10, 2025.

It should be noted that in Nantes, some French priests, members of Bishop Sanborn's *Roman Catholic Institute*, have succeeded the late Father Philippe Guépin, and are very successful in their apostolate, both traditional (Mass, Sacraments, etc.) and modern (a constant presence on social media channels). It is understandable then, that the Society of Saint Pius X, accustomed to keeping a "low profile" with the modernists, is instead concerned about the tedious presence of zealous "Guérardian" priests in Nantes, intending to counter their arguments. *Sodalitium* willingly leaves the honor and burden of responding to Father Di Sorco to our Breton confreres, limiting ourselves to say a few words to Father Tranquillo's

Father Daniele Di Sorco

disciple regarding… that famous flying off the handle I mentioned above.

Is Father Ricossa a falsifier?

Father Di Sorco left Albano Laziale, then, and traveled to Nantes (Priory of Saint-Louis, on March 10, 2025)... specifically to speak ill of the "sedevacantists", (in fact, instead, he speaks against the defenders of the Thesis of Cassiciacum), with a "*Lecture slide presentation on sedevacantism*" entitled "*Une Eglise sans Pape?*" ["*A Church without a Pope*?"] (Take note that in all of France, the Society hasn't been able to find a speaker suitable for this purpose, and had to look for one in Italy). But let's get to minute 1:28:29 (and what follows) and transcribe/translate the speaker's words: "*The sedevacantists should explain to us how their confessions can be valid if they believe that there is no longer any subject of ordinary jurisdiction in the Church. You know, there was a debate in Italy with the head (sic) of the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii—the group that is now in Nantes (sic) and upholds the Thesis of Cassiciacum. There was a debate, because there was a local priest* [this is Father Tranquillo; it seems that since he left the Society, he has become unmentionable, Author's note] *who presented this argument: How are your confessions valid? And Father Ricossa, the head of the Institute, responded by citing a text from Merkelbach's famous manual on moral* [theology], *saying: here, one sees that, in this case, the priest receives jurisdiction directly from God. Except that he cut the quotation short. The quotation actually says that they receive jurisdiction from God through the Pope. And this changes everything. Therefore, if he was forced to cut the quotation short, to change the quotation, to essentially falsify it because he made it say things different from what it originally said, which shows that they have difficulty in responding to this argument.*"

Dear Father Di Sorco: Lies have short legs!

The unsuspecting faithful of the Priory of Saint Louis of Nantes evidently had no way of knowing what Father Ricossa actually said, and may even be unaware of his existence. So Father Di Sorco can make them believe anything, certain that they will swallow it like spring water. But for those who wants to check, we offer them the opportunity to listen to Father Ricossa's own words (Milan, November 15, 2014: XIII convegno di Studi Albertariani "La Tesi di Cassiciacum ieri e oggi La Chiesa ai tempi di Jorge…–Gloria.tv) and to read the transcript found on a site that was previously unknown to me, but well-deserving: lumen publicum: La Tesi di Cassiciacum, obiezioni e risposte (Parte II) .

"*One of their more serious writers, - Father Mauro Tranquillo - a priest of the SSPX who first expressed himself verbally on this and then in writing (we also spoke about it personally), and, as a sharp-tongued Venetian saying goes, he stumped me, ... I wouldn't want to distort his thinking, but essentially summarizing it as I understood it, it goes like this. I myself, talking about the consecrations of bishops (I also spoke about it here), insisted on a truth that is taught by the ordinary Magisterium of the Church, namely: the jurisdiction of the bishop, and that all ecclesiastical jurisdiction comes from God – because everything comes from God – through the Pope. This is what the Conciliars deny, this is what was removed in Lumen Gentium. But this is what the Magisterium of the Church has said up to the time of Pius XII, and therefore it is the Magisterium of the Church 'and that's that.' 'Well,' says Father Tranquillo, 'if the entire jurisdiction of the Church comes from the Pope and you say that the Pope is absolutely not the Pope, then what follows? That the Church is totally devoid of jurisdiction, there is no longer any power of jurisdiction?' And so, in itself, this*

already poses a problem for indefectibility, etc. I responded to this in my 'Response to the Dossier on Sedevacantism'. But what strikes people most is the example he gives: 'Since jurisdiction is necessary for the validity of the Sacrament of Penance' - and I add: by Divine Law - 'if there is no Pope, who is the source of all jurisdiction, no one has jurisdiction to hear confessions, and therefore all confessions are invalid. This is impossible - and above all, it would make our confessions invalid too - therefore, the Pope remains', a Pope who does nothing, who does not teach, who makes no laws, who does not promulgate, who is there only to render the confessions of Father Tranquillo valid. And then he goes on to render them valid without intending to, because he says: 'you have no legitimate ministry in the Church.' But through some 'loophole' in canon law, jurisdiction extends even there…

The basic error (now I don't want to reduce to a minute what deserves to be treated much more carefully, because it is an intelligent objection, as intelligent is the person who made it), the basic error is a confusion which I think Father Tranquillo does not speak about (and if I am wrong he will correct me), between jurisdiction in the internal forum and jurisdiction in the external forum. Here I have photocopies of the Manual of Moral Theology (1935) by Merkelbach, who is a Dominican Thomist, in which, speaking of the power of the keys, the 'Sacrament of Penance', he specifically makes this distinction:

'Iurisdictio alia est fori Ecclesiae seu externi, quando directe et primario spectat publicum Ecclesiae regimen et utilitatem; alia fori Dei seu interni, quando directe et primario spectat privatam cuiuslibet fidelis utilitatem. Prior est potestas ecclesiastica et socialis quae conceditur a Pontifice ex propria auctoritate, et ideo ex hac derivatur ab eo ut a causa principali et auctoritate eius exercetur; altera est potestas non ecclesiastica sed divina, quae conceditur auctoritate propria Dei (qui solus valet directe attingere conscientiam et vinculum peccati), mediante tamen Pontifice ut ministro et instrumento divinitatis, et ideo non auctoritate Ecclesiae propria sed auctoritate ipsius Dei exercenda.' (B. H. Merkelbach o.p., Summa Theologiae Moralis, III, p. 526, Brugis 1962).

'Jurisdiction is one thing in the forum of the Church, or the external forum, which directly and primarily concerns the governance, government, and public welfare of the Church; jurisdiction is another thing in God's forum, or the internal forum, which directly and primarily concerns the private welfare of each believer. The first is the ecclesiastical and social power granted by the Pontiff on his own authority, and therefore derives from it as its principal cause; the other is a power that is not ecclesiastical but divine, and is granted by God's own authority.'

After which, Merkelbach explains [that] the power of the keys which he spoke about and which come from the Gospel, is conferred to the priest as jurisdiction in the internal forum - and therefore in confession - with priestly ordination. Thus, the power of confession, as everyone knows, is given by priestly ordination, which confers the power of the keys and jurisdiction in the internal forum, not coming from the Pope, but coming from God. It is true that jurisdiction in the external forum is necessary, because the sacrament of Orders gives the priest the power to hear confessions, but he needs to have subjects, and these subjects are given to him by the Pope. It is the Pope who says 'you are the parish priest there' or 'you have the power to hear confessions there' etc., etc. The subjects are given by the Pope, but the power to confess is given by God with Ordination. Now, Father Tranquillo says that in a 'state of necessity', we have the subjects, and consequently, what is a purely ecclesiastical question is resolved by the 'state of necessity', whereas power of jurisdiction to confess radically comes from God. The lack of distinction between this jurisdiction in the internal forum, which is divine, and the jurisdiction in the external forum, which is ecclesiastical, is the flaw in reasoning. It is true that 'all jurisdiction comes from God ***through the mediation of the Pope****', but this applies only to jurisdiction in the external forum; the jurisdiction in the internal forum, for the private good of the individual faithful, like the power of the keys, comes directly from God. Thus, I do not say this, but Merkelbach and the other authors who deal with the matter say it.*"

Please excuse the long (self) quotation, which might be annoying as well, given the spoken style and the "off the cuff" manner of speaking,

but it was necessary to clear up what we are talking about.

To make this understandable for the average faithful, moderately instructed in his religion, it will be enough to remember the following:

- The power to confess is received from God through Sacred Ordination (the power of the keys, the internal forum), so much so that a diocesan bishop or even the Pope, should they have not yet received priestly ordination, cannot confess.
- By Divine Right, however, this priest must be able to exercise his power over his subjects (since the sacrament of penance is a tribunal), and this is given to him by law with jurisdiction (in the external forum) which ultimately comes from the Pope.

In my conference I recalled both aspects - and I did not truncate, change, falsify any of it (specifically that part which, according to Father Di Sorco, I cut off in my explanation, starting with the words: "It is true that jurisdiction in the external forum is necessary, etc"). Father Di Sorco may not agree with the conclusions I draw - he is perfectly free to think differently than me - but he cannot in the least accuse me of having withheld part of the truth, which I clearly stated to those who were listening.

To which, in conclusion, I will say: dear Father Di Sorco, I did not falsify what Merkelbach wrote, while you have falsified what I have said. *Medice, cura te ipsum* (Luke, 4, 23).

A Livornese in Velletri? (only in spirit)

Unless it's a case of telepathy, there must be a direct line between Albano Laziale, the headquarters of the Italian district of the Society of Saint Pius X, and Velletri, where the fortnightly *Sì sì no no* is printed. This might be surprising, since the principal editor of *Sì sì no no* was strictly connected with the "resistance" of Bishop Williamson (R.I.P.) which arose in opposition to the so-called "Neo-Society", while Albano is, as I said, the central seat of the "Neo-Society" in Italy. But it is precisely in Italy where we find the famous story of the "thieves of Pisa" - who quarrel by day and steal together by night - raising the suspicion that the "resistors" and the "Neo-Societies", are, in the final count, the same thing. And in fact, the fortnightly that Father Putti - of venerated memory - wanted to be "anti-modernist" has long since, with the burial of its founder, become "anti-sedevacantist".

Their issue no. 3 of February 15, 2025 is no exception, in which a "pseudonymous" "Roman Canon" (who perhaps might be a bit Roman, that is true, but I doubt that, *salve meliori iudico*, he is an authentic Canon) published an article entitled "*La giurisdizione viene da Dio alla Chiesa tramite il Papa*" ["*Jurisdication comes from God to the Church through the Pope*"]. On this proposition I would have nothing to say, indeed, I would subscribe to it, were it not the fact that the article does not speak of jurisdiction in the external forum (e.g. of the diocesan ordinary in his diocese) but rather of the internal forum (of the penitent's confessor). And here, as I said in the preceding article, some distinctions must be made. The fact is that the "Roman Canon" and the "Livornese of Nantes" are copying each other, directing their attacks (explicitly or implicitly) at Father Ricossa regarding the quote from Father Merkelbach. Both oppose the indefectibility of the Church to the *Thesis of Cassiciacum*, as if we hadn't responded to this long ago (*Sodalitium* n. 56, pp. 20 ff.). It is as if their recognizing the magisterial authority of Vatican II and all the occupants of the See of Peter, from Montini to Bergoglio, was not, in fact, denying the very indefectibility of the Church, which would have changed its nature and doctrine!

The Sacrament of Orders

The "Roman Canon" doesn't seem to worry about doctrine, only about the institution; but how can he maintain that the Church would end in the case of Sede Vacante? This is obviously impossible, as the vacant See occurs …at the death of the Pope! He then makes the distinction between a "transient" (temporary) vacant See and a habitual one: the former would be possible, the latter would cause the impossible disappearance of the Church (forgetting that no Church law sets a certain time limit for the duration of the See's vacancy). In the "transient" case, the Church still subsists, still having Cardinals and resident Bishops; in the latter case, it does not. Thus, the impossibility of admitting "sedevacantism" is "demonstrated". After all, Archbishop Lefebvre had already written this in 1979: how can a Pope be elected without Cardinals?

This objection may be directed against "sedevacantism", but it is certainly not (and we discuss it extensively in this issue) against *The Thesis of Cassiciacum* (which, among other things, speaks of an occupied See rather than a vacant See). But I wouldn't waste my time or yours, readers, by returning to this topic for the upteenth time. The theme of this little note is, in fact, a statement that, even during Lent, brought an amused smile to my face.

The corner of good humor

Following in the footsteps of Father Tranquillo and a close associate of Father Di Sorco, the "Roman Canon" claims that a Pope is always necessary to grant jurisdiction to the confessor: without the Pope, all confessions are invalid! (Therefore, Bergoglio serves not as an infallible Teacher of the Faith, but to validate the confessions of Father Tranquillo, Father Di Sorco, and Father… Velletri). But… during the Sede Vacante? Bergoglio was only a step away from physically leaving the See… who will validate the confessions of the traditionalist-Bergoglian priests left orphaned by their Leader? (Lines written before the aforementioned death, Ed.)

It is here (on page 3) that cogent logic of reasoning leads to a rather amusing assertion which, until I am proven otherwise, seems completely unfounded to me: "*in the transient Sede Vacante,* ***the College of Cardinals is truly and actively capable of supplying for the deceased Pope (ensuring, among other things, the validity of confessions and marriages)...***" This was all written in bold in the cited text. If Father…Velletri tells me that the College of Cardinals ensures the election of the Pope in a conclave, I can believe that, but that the College supplies for the deceased Pope, and ensures the validity of confessions and even marriages (in defiance of Canon 1098) - that is news to me, and is, in my opinion, the joke of the year.

First of all, in Sede Vacante the College of Cardinals, or the Episcopal Body, does not supply for the Pope; second of all, and even more important, the Cardinals do not give jurisdiction for Confession! (on the powers of Cardinals in Sede Vacante, please see Canon 241 and the Apostolic Constitution of Pius XII, Vacantis Apostollicae Sedis, nn. 1-5)

If anything, the local ordinary gives subjects to the confessor who has the power of the keys from God through priestly ordination; and if, in addition to the Pope, the local ordinary were to be missing (a case which is not at all impossible), who, according to the bizarre doctrine of the "Canon" and the "Livornese", would give the power to confess? We wrote about it in *Sodalitium* n. 56, p. 24:

"*Without the Pope, the Church - founded by Peter (Matthew 16:18) - is truly acephalous (lacking a visible head), widowed of her shepherd*

The College of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel

(without governance), and deprived of infallible magisterium: there is a lack, in act but not in potency, of the hierarchical Church as Christ constituted it (i.e. monarchical and not episcopal; the existence of a subordinate episcopacy does not substantially change things from this point of view; the Church I remind the TC [the Society's Italian magazine, Ed.] - *is not collegial, but monarchical, founded on the Primacy of Peter).*

In what way, then, could the absolute absence of all residential bishops or cardinals compromise the indefectible duration of the Church's existence? Only in making a successor to the Throne of Peter impossible. 'During the vacancy of the primatial See,' continues Zapelena in the passage previously cited, 'the right and the duty (along with the divine promise) to elect someone who may legitimately succeed the deceased Pope in rights and primacy remains in the Church. ***Throughout this entire time, the ecclesiastical constitution does not change, inasmuch as supreme power is not devolved to the college of bishops or of cardinals, but the divine law concerning the election of the successor remains.'*** *" "The supreme power is not devolved to the college of bishops or of cardinals'*: Velletri urgently needs a refresher in Ecclesiology.

Appendix: An Esoterist in Suresnes

By Suresnes we mean the seat of the magazine of the French district of the Society of Saint Pius X, *Fideliter*. In their issue n. 282 (November-December 2024) they presented a nice dossier on the Sacred Heart that ends with an article by Louis Charbonneau-Lassay: *Le Pélican, emblème du Sacré-Cœur* [*The Pelican, emblem of the Sacred Heart*] (pp. 22 ff.) The article is taken from the magazine *Regnabit* from the year 1925. I wonder if those at *Fideliter* ignore the fact that *Regnabit* had been infiltrated by René Guénon and his disciple Charbonneau-Lassay for conveying a symbolism of the Sacred Heart that is entirely in accordance with esoteric doctrines? Unavoidable, the question arises: *Fideliter*: ignorance or complicity?

La Voix de Rome (a response to *La Voix des Francs*)

Father Francesco Ricossa

Bruno Saglio, from *Éditions Saint-Remi*, in his magazine (*La Voix des Francs Catholiques*, n. 73, July 2024) responded to my article entitled *Buon autore, pessimo editore* [*Good author, bad publisher*], from *Sodalitium* n. 75 (n. 74 in the French edition), where the good author was Father Jeoffroid, and the bad publisher was, precisely, Bruno Saglio. I understand the term "bad publisher" is a bit strong and might have irritated the director of Éditions Saint-Remi, in which case I offer my assurance that I understand. He may be consoled by the prompt intervention of Father Grossin, now Rolland, who immediately came to his aid, happy to warn him again against "Abbé Ricossa": Grossin-Saglio, same school, (that of Louis-Hubert Remy), same way of thinking, "même combat" ["same fight"]. This is not, in fact, a personal dispute (as for that, I have nothing against Saglio, whom I consider to be a good Christian) but rather a question - at the very least - if not of doctrine, at least of mindset. This is not without significance for the education of our readers.

A Victim? I wouldn't say so…

La Voix des Francs complains of having suffered a "*violent attack*", and adds: "*we would not be so surprised by a similar accusation from declared enemies of the Church, but no, such accusations come from a priest who should be defending the faith" ("sensé défendre la foi"*: dear editors, what should be written is *"censé"* and not *"sensé"*; the error is repeated on p. 4, so it doesn't appear to be an oversight). Father Ricossa should be defending the faith, but isn't he instead an "*enemy of the Church*" albeit undeclared, but hidden? This is what Louis-Hubert Remy, Abbé Grossin, B. Saglio, "F. Causas", "H. Barbier", and others have been publicly maintaining for years, so I'm astonished at their surprise that anyone, after so many beatings, should dare to object. But for

La Voix des Francs, this does not make a legitimate defense, since on principle, the *Sodalitium* argument is "*derogatory*", "*full of rash, false statements*", while attacking the Éditions Saint-Remi means, *ipso facto*, we are attacking nothing less than "the common good" (and not just the mentioned publisher's).

A little advertising spot

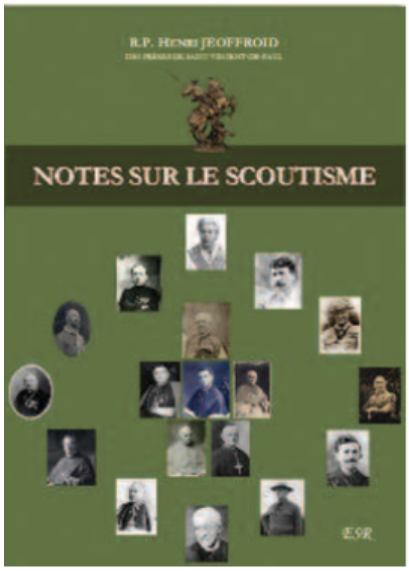
Before delving into the details, the publisher (pp. 3-4) praises his publishing house, the quality of its books, the authors it publishes, etc. I find it normal for a retailer to advertise its products, so, to avoid any misunderstanding, I point out that Saint Remi publications are exceptional, unsurpassed, from a material standpoint (its bindings, etc.) and, as I've already written, they also do publish excellent authors. But we are talking about something else! Let's instead talk about the publishing of Father Jeoffroid's work against Scouting.

My two criticisms on publishing the writing of Father Jeoffroid against the Scouting movement

Let me recall, then, my two criticisms for the publishing of Father Jeoffroid's unpublished text (a meritorious work in itself). First: placing this edition under the patronage of the Society of Saint Pius X and of Archbishop Lefebvre. Second: highlighting those secondary actors who were opposed to the Scouting movement, particularly in the biographical memoir on Father Jeoffroid, and almost completely obscuring the role of Monsignor Benigni, who was Father Jeoffroid's mentor and friend, and who actively collaborated in the dissemination of the text in question.

An (excellent) book against Scouting under the patronage of Archbishop Lefebvre

I have previously written, and I repeat: the dossier that Father Jeoffroid wrote against the Scouting movement, including the "Catholic" version by Father Sevin, is excellent. Making it public and accessible even today is therefore worthy of praise, and our review does not fail to



The book in Question

recommend it to our readers. The criticism by *Sodalitium* is not, therefore, about the text by Father Jeoffroid - who demonstrated the strong link between the scouting movement and theosophy - but rather the edition of this text (a work by the editors and publishers) which places Father Jeoffroid's work against Scouting under the aegis of Archbishop Lefebvre, who was always in favor of scouting. The reader is thus deceived, and the truth is trampled upon. Furthermore, for a self-proclaimed "sedevacantist" publisher who violently criticizes the "*Thesis of Cassiciacum*" as being insufficiently "sedevacantist", to publicly praise Archbishop Lefebvre - who expelled from the Society all those who were not in communion with Paul VI and John Paul II, whether or not they were "sedevacantist" or "Cassiciacumists" - is a deception to readers and an insult to the truth. This is, in any case, a tendency often manifested among so many so-called "sedevacantists" who accuse Bishop Guérard des Lauriers, and yet have an undeniable and truly revealing cult worship for Archbishop Lefebvre.

Still more on Archbishop Lefebvre: *La Voix des Francs* in favor of "una cum" consecrations

If, in issue 73, *La Voix des Francs* attacked the undersigned, in issue 74 it openly supported the episcopal consecrations in communion with John Paul II, performed by Archbishop Lefebvre, and hoped for new episcopal consecrations within

the Society, and therefore (at that time) in communion with Bergoglio. Commenting on the death of Bishop Tissier de Mallerais, Bruno Saglio's editorial, in fact, expresses his own (i.e. Saglio's) "*deep concern*": only two bishops in the Society remain! So, you might ask yourself, *quid ad nos*? But Saglio is worried about the seminarians of the Society, what will become of them? "*Let us pray that the SSPX will finally open its eyes…*" and recognize the vacancy of the See, you might say? No! "*...open its eyes to the urgent necessity for the valid transmission of the sacraments, moving ahead with new solemn consecrations as their founder desired (...), that the SSPX will follow the example of Archbishop Lefebvre who had the courage to consecrate - 36 years ago, along with Bishop Castro Mayer - four new Bishops without Apostolic mandate.*" In truth, a grotesque "apostolic mandate" was read during that sacrilegious ceremony, supposedly received from the Church, and not from the Pope who was however solemnly recognized as such. Now, B. Saglio would want that this misdeed be repeated, to give to the world more *una cum* bishops, even while it has too many *non una cum* bishops. In reading *La Voix des Francs*, however, it would seem that these bishops don't even exist, and that the validity of sacraments depends entirely upon the Society of Saint Pius X, which has such great respect for said validity that it has priests who were "*ordained*" with the new rite celebrate and hear confessions, or have simple priests of the Society invalidly administer Confirmations. (We then wonder how priests ordained by *non una cum* bishops can maintain good relations with those who have such a low opinion of these same bishops). But *La Voix des Francs* reproaches me for my ingratitude towards Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society: "*Is there any need to remind Father Ricossa that he was trained in the seminary at Écône and ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre (after all, during an una cum ceremony…) and that therefore without Archbishop Lefebvre he would not have been a priest and his IMBC would not have existed?*" Perhaps there is need to remind the Éditions Saint-Remi that Father Ricossa and his confreres published a "*Public apology*" for having spread the errors of the Society of Saint Pius X, and that I repeat this apology for my having received a *una cum* ordination, when it would have been possible to receive the priesthood from the hands of Bishop Guérard des Lauriers. But B. Saglio only mentions this bishop to denigrate him, while when writing of Archbishop Lefebvre he seems to "*lose his mind*" (to quote the accusation he leveled at me), to the point of publishing a book by Father Lafitte ("*one of the priests trained by Archbishop Lefebvre*", writes the Éditions Saint-Remi catalogue, while not ignoring that it who would be better off remaining silent than speaking) entitled "*L'esprit de Mgr Lefebvre*". Without hatred, animosity or rancor, and without denying the many qualities of Archbishop Lefebvre, no one can deny that the Society of Saint Pius X recognizes, and imposes on its faithful to recognize, the validity of the N.O.M. and the legitimacy of Paul VI and his successors, and this is due to the choice that Archbishop Lefebvre made in 1979.

Therefore, it is not true that Archbishop Lefebvre - with regard to the legitimacy of Paul VI and his successors "*did not want to resolve the question*" (p. 8: "*Il n'a pas voulu trancher*"). Despite the frequent variations in Archbishop Lefebvre's thinking, the facts speak for themselves: in 1979 Archbishop Lefebvre resolved the matter with his "Position of the Society on the Mass and the Pope" and, consequently, from 1982 onward, he obliged all ordinands to sign the famous oath in which the legitimacy of John Paul II was recognized. Period. As for Scouting, Saglio objects that even the Popes approved it (pp. 9-10). Certainly. And in fact, we do not accuse Archbishop Lefebvre for also approving the Scouting movements, including Riaumont - but we accuse the edition of Father Jeoffroid's book for "enlisting" Archbishop Lefebvre in condemning the Scouting movement, which he did not (on the contrary). Also, (also) his support for the oratory system *(patronages*) does not mean he understood or denounced the Masonic and Theosophic origins of Scouting. "*Don Ricossa cannot tolerate Archbishop Lefebvre being held up as an example*" (p. 10), writes Saglio. It depends on what he is being held up as an example: certainly not as in condemning Scouting. B. Saglio concludes: "*It*

The Episcopal Consecrations of Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988

seems that every reference in favor of Archbishop Lefebvre makes don Ricossa lose his mind" (p. 9). I might say the contrary, that every reference to Archbishop Lefebvre blinds Saglio's eyes, and prior to him, Remy's eyes, and even - going up the branches - the eyes of the the notoriously slanderous BOC (*Bulletin de l'Occident Chrétien*, where Tailhades, Remy, and Bonnet de Villers wrote under pseudonyms). Slanderous erga omnes [of everyone]... except Archbishop Lefebvre.

Monsignor Benigni in the shadows. And we still do not understand why…

The editorial by *La Voix des Francs* doesn't deny, indeed it admits, that they have left Monsignor Benigni's role in the Jeoffroid affair in the shadows. The reason is ridiculous: "*Louis-Michel Dufay did not bother (n'a pas pris le temps) to speak of Monsignor Benigni's role in this affair since M. Carichon had already done so*" (p. 6) (but he did have time to mention other authors - certainly well deserving - who played no role in this affair). Why wasn't Monsignor Benigni mentioned? "*Due to a lack of time and space*" (p. 7). And anyway, Father Ricossa says inaccurate things in order to "*put Monsignor Benigni in first place everywhere*" (p. 7). So here we have it: their apparent annoyance against Monsignor Benigni - much more than the lack of time and space - seems to be the real reason for Éditions Saint-Remi's attitude towards him. And yet… does Mister Saglio find it meaningless that Father Maignen, of the Brothers of Saint Vincent, was a leader and collaborator of Monsignor Benigni's *Sodalitium Pianum*, and that Father Jeoffroid, of the same congregation, was one of the two faithful priests at Monsignor Benigni's funeral? (which demonstrates a closeness and intimacy that is certainly not accidental).

If, as I believe, there is an annoyance toward the figure of Monsignor Benigni, it remains to be understood why, given that, for example, the Éditions Saint-Remi commendably publishes various writings by his close collaborator, Father Maignen. Is it ignorance (in the sense of a lack of knowledge)? Language barrier? Distrust of an author with a strong critical spirit and a profound academic commitment? All these things combined? If the Éditions Saint-Remi were sincere, they could easily resolve this mystery.

P. S.: I had completed this chapter of my article when I became aware of the fact that not only did the Éditions Saint-Remi ignore Monsignor Benigni, but, almost certainly without knowing it, in a certain sense attacked him. While our *Centro libraro Sodalitium* published (in Italian) Monsignor Benigni's *Storia sociale della Chiesa* (and Radio Spada published a history of the Church translated in Italian in his time by Father Rosa S. J., who was Benigni's mortal enemy), the Éditions Saint-Remi published *Histoire partiale, histoire vraie* by Jean Guiraud (1866-1953) (2024, reprint of the 1911 edition, 4 volumes, 100 €), then a professor at the University of Besançon, an apologetic history against the secularist manuals of the time. But perhaps the Éditions Saint-Remi are unaware of the heated controversy that erupted over Volume IV between Guiraud and I. de Récalde (aka Father Paul Boulin, Monsignor Benigni's right-hand man in France and editor at the R.I.S.S. [Revue internationale des sociétés secrètes, Ed.]), who even wrote an entire volume to respond to Giraud's accusations: *Histoire Jésuite, Histoire vraie* (if B. Saglio wishes, I can send it to him in PDF format). One would have expected a better understanding of the facts from supposed experts of the "anti-liberal school".

My two general criticisms of Éditions Saint-Remi (and not only)

So far, I have limited myself in my criticism regarding the publication of Father

Jeoffroid's excellent book because of 1) its support for the Society of Saint Pius X and Archbishop Lefebvre, when they defended and continue to defend Scouting, and 2) the issue of Monsignor Benigni. In my review, however, I mentioned two more general flaws that I see in Éditions Saint-Remi's editorial line and, more generally, in the so-called "*anti-liberal school*" as conceived, in that time, by various figures, but particularly by Louis-Hubert Remy. The first flaw consists in the unqualified inclusion in the so-called "*anti-liberal school*" (largely nineteenth-century) of authors influenced by the nineteenth-century "traditionalist fideism". The second flaw consists in the popularization of (also) less serious authors, which is due on the one hand to a prejudice against "university" studies (without due distinction) and on the other to a strong pseudo-supernaturalist tendency. The two flaws likely stem from the same root.

"Traditionalist" fideism

In the editorial of Issue n. 73 of *La Voix des Francs* against *Sodalitium*, Bruno Saglio wrote: "*Father Ricossa does not cite authors from our catalogue who are supposedly bad, but accuses us of publishing 'reliable authors as well as others contaminated, for example, by nineteenth-century fideistic traditionalism.*'" B. Saglio asks us who these authors are, after having listed in his defense a long list of the "best authors" around (pp. 4-5). He doesn't even realize that in this list he has, in fact, included some writers who, though worthy in many respects and excusable in many others, are precisely among those who have been influenced by this current of thought. We have already spoken of some of those mentioned in the pages of *Sodalitium*, such as Donoso Cortés (*Sodalitium* nn. 50 and 51) or Msgr. Fèvre, speaking of whom, Father Pinaud praises Bonnetty *(Sodalitium* n. 70-71). Another master of the counterrevolution, and from this point of view praiseworthy, and well represented in the catalogue of Éditions Saint-Remi, is Count Joseph de Maistre, who was undoubtedly a "Traditionalist", as well as a Freemason, albeit a counterrevolutionary one (for more on him, see *Sodalitium* n. 39: *Joseph de Maistre esoteric*?). Among the authors cited by Saglio is the converted Rabbi, Paul Drach (highly esteemed by Louis-Hubert Remi), and his disciples (such as the Lémann brothers), yet he too was a "traditionalist" who (I believe in good faith) promoted the grave error of a good Kabbalah alongside a spurious Kabbalah (see *Sodalitium* n. 70-71). The list could be continued, after all we were not the first to observe this fundamental problem in the nineteenth-century so-called "anti-liberal school" spread by Remy and his followers: one of the students of Abbé Belmont - the seminarian Athanase-Henri Sauget - had already done so in his *Mgr Gaume et le Traditionalisme*, a thirty-one page study dated November 2014. We, then, are not the only ones, and perhaps not even the first, to have for a long time and repeatedly noted this flaw in the school of thought to which (also) Éditions Saint-Remi refers. Our other criticism of this "school of thought" is also not new. It generally concerns - within Catholic studies - the need to follow a line of "rigor and truth". It is no coincidence that we cited in our review the programmatic article: "*Appunti per lo studio della Sacra Scrittura (e, in genere, delle altre scienze ecclesiastiche*" ["*Notes for the study of Sacred Scripture (and, in general, of other ecclesiastical sciences*"] (*Sodalitium* n. 70-71, September 2020; and in French n. 69-70). In doing exegesis, theology, ecclesiastical history, and the necessary documentation against "Judeo-Freemasonry", the Éditions Saint-Remi and similar publishers prefer authors poorly documented and poorly reliable. One cannot fight against Freemasonry using legends like those of Léo Taxil, nor, as the authors cited in my article demonstrate, the "Pike-Mazzini" legend or similar ones.

B. Saglio attacks me then, in the footsteps of Father Paladino and many others, for my exegesis on the Apocalypse referred to in n. 49 of April 1999, to which he opposes that of Venerable Holzhauser (p. 12). It is a pity that Holzhauser (who, among others such as Abbé Grossin now Rolland, believed in the pseudo-prophesies of pseudo-Malachi) places the birth of the Antichrist to the year 1855, and maintains that he will die at the age of 55 and a half. But like the Jehovah's

Mons. Umberto Benigni

Witnesses, certain people cannot be convinced that their unfulfilled prophecies are not true, and they shift the date as they please. But what is the profoundly exegetical reason why L.-H. Remy first and B. Saglio now firmly believe Holzhauser's exegesis? Because he announced the coming of the "Grand Monarch" and the "Holy Pontiff", which evidently in Brittany is believed almost as a dogma of faith. And in fact, Éditions Saint-Remi has published various works on the "Grand Monarch", among them *Le Grand Monarque à venir, et la paix sous son règne* [*The Great Monarch to Come, and Peace Under His Reign*] by Father Franz Spirago (1862 1942). I haven't read the book, but the presentation that the editor furnished me is enough, given that the author and the editor give credit to Adrien Péladan (*Le dernier mot des prophéties*) and Nostradamus! If this latter is famous, perhaps not so famous is Adrien Péladan Senior (1815-1890), a militant monarchist and a "Catholic" - but an occultist - the worthy father of Joséphin (1858-1918), famous for the Cabbalist Order of the Rose-Cross, which he founded with Sanislas de Guaita and Gérard Encausse (known as "Papus"), and of Adrien Péladan Junior (1844-1885), a homeopathic doctor who was a victim of his own medicines and also a student of the occult sciences: lovely family, no doubt about it! One doesn't need to read Paul Airiau's *(Le Grand Monarque dans le catholicisme français, XIX-XX siècles*) to recognize an evident Joachimite and millenarian ancestry in the myth of the Angelic Pope and the Grand Monarch, sometimes combined with unorthodox deviations such as that of the doctrine of renewal by Canon Emmanuel Chabauty (1827-1914) and others. Chabauty's book, *"Études scripturales, patristiques, théologiques et philosophiques, sur l'avenir de la religion catholique selon le plan divin ou la régénération de l'humanité et la rénovation de l'univers*" ["*Scriptural, patristic, theological and philosophical studies on the future of the Catholic religion according to the divine plan or the regeneration of humanity and the renovation of the universe"*] (1890-1893) was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books (1896) together with four other of his works on the "*Système de la rénovation*". This did not prevent Chabauty from being listed favorably in Éditions Saint-Remi's catalog of authors. Furthermore, the catalogue of publications by B. Saglio does not know what to make of the Index of Prohibited Books: describing the book by Déodat Lapilli "*Le message de La Salette commenté par Mélanie Calvat et son confesseur*" which is a book by Abbé Gilbert Combe, (Melanie's confessor): "*It is true that the spread of this book was rapidly halted by its being placed on the Index on April 12, 1907. This affair deserves to be studied as it reveals the hostility the Secret of La Salette encountered among a faction of the French episcopate and other clerics who did not accept that the Immaculate Conception should echo biblical threats against the ministers of God*" (note that the Pope, in 1907, was Saint Pius X). In the editorial against Father Ricossa (p. 12), *La voix des Francs* accuses him of "*errors against La Salette*" "*going as far as prohibiting the reading of the Secret to the faithful*," something I have never said or written, limiting myself to publishing a collection of all the acts of the Holy See on this subject (which effectively prohibited such reading).

And finally, the *La Voix des Francs* editorial newly accuses me of having defended "*that great Italian fellon, Rampolla del Tindaro*" (or the Cardinal Secretary of State for Leo XIII named Secretary of the Holy Office by Saint Pius X who, parenthetically, was Italian like him). Perhaps it is opportune to recall that we never defended Cardinal Rampolla del Tindaro - with whose religious and diplomatic policies we

disagree - but rather we defend historical truth. As for testimony that we hid "sous le boisseau" ["under a bushel", Ed.] (p. 12), B. Saglio should know that we did so out of respect for the memory of an old friend (and I can explain myself better privately with B. Saglio, if he wishes). It is the same historical truth we defended regarding the so-called retraction of Msgr. Guérard des Lauriers, which was also distributed by Éditions Saint-Remi following L.-H. Remy, and which we have extensively refuted.

B. Saglio concludes with two categorical assertions, both as categorical as they are false: the first is that our "*rejection of these works*" has as its "*common denominator*" their "*incompatibility with the Thesis of Cassiacum*". No, Mr. Saglio. Many works in your catalogue are incompatible not with the *Thesis of Cassiciacum*, but with reason, common sense, and historical truth. Unfortunately there can be - and there are - people who follow the *Thesis of Cassiciacum* and believe in the Grand Monarch, and B. Saglio knows them well. The second assertion is that we "*make this Thesis a dogma of Faith*". This is completely unfounded. While it is true that we accept into our seminary only those who adhere to the Thesis, we also administer sacraments to those who do not. The Thesis is not a Truth of Faith, it is simply true. And finally, we would advise Mr. Saglio, who believes that the next Pope will be named directly by Saint Peter, that Saint Peter would have already elected him at Palmar de Troya in the person of Clement Dominguez-Gregory XVII after the death of Paul VI. B. Saglio doesn't believe in that? Then he is a dangerous rationalist who doesn't believe in prophecies…just like me!

P.S. 1: Perhaps I understand the reason for so much coldness towards Monsignor Benigni on the part of a certain traditionalism we've discussed. It's enough to reread some passages from the program of the *Sodalitium Pianum* approved and praised by St. Pius X:

"*14. [we are] against "modernized" philosophical, dogmatic and biblical teaching which, even when not purely modernist, is at least made equal to archaeological or anatomical teaching, as if it were not an immortal and life-giving doctrine that all clergy, without exception, must learn especially for their priestly ministry; [we are] for ecclesiastical teaching inspired and guided by the glorious tradition of Scholasticism and the Holy Doctors of the Church and the best theologians of the Counter-Reformation,* ***with all the serious aids of scientific method and documentation.***

15. [we are] ***against false mysticism with individualistic and Enlightenment tendencies;*** *[we are] for an intense and profound spiritual life, according to the doctrinal and practical teaching of the Saints and mystical authors praised by the Church.*"

I put in bold the points that might be indigestible for our friends: an effective digestif is urgently needed!

P.S. 2: This article was already finished in the editorial office when I received an email from Éditions Saint-Remi containing a statement by Henri Barbier and Felix Causas (two pseudonyms) in opposition against Adrien Abauzit regarding the Cardinal Rampolla affair. I would like to point out that I was completely unaware of Adrien Abauzit's video (posted online in June) and that I only discovered its existence through their statement, which also calls me into question. For my part, I can only reiterate what I wrote in various articles dedicated to this topic and which I published in *Sodalitium* (issues 60 and 65 in the Italian edition, and n. 62 in the French edition with an appendix that does not appear in the Italian edition. The review of the Conclave of 1903 published in n. 65 in the Italian edition, I believe has unfortunately not been translated and published in the French edition).

Always, in times of crisis, the thoughts of believers, and not only them, returns to the theme of the Antichrist, and they believe that his ominous arrival among us is either imminent or has already been realized. Since the times we live in are certainly among the most terrible - both for the Church and for society - it is natural that his coming be feared or predicted.

Exegetes, however, disagree on the interpretation of Sacred Scripture on this topic, and some speak of an "heresiological antichrist" (where all heretics, throughout history, are the antichrists) or an "eschatological antichrist" (that is, one who will manifest himself in the end times). For some, then, he will be an individual, for others a community or a moral person; in the past it was believed that the antichrist was one or another enemy of Christ. For the heresiarch Luther, the antichrist was the Pope or the Papacy.

We offer our readers the opinion of a great modern exegete, Monsignor Francesco Spadafora (1913-1997), the professor of biblical exegesis at the Pontifical Lateran University as well as a collaborator with the anti-modernist magazine "Sì sì no no" founded by Father Francesco Putti. His thesis on the antichrist being "heresiological" and not "escatological" is certainly in the minority, but it is probably the most ancient, founded as it is on the texts of the Evangelist John, the only one to cite the term "antichrist" in Sacred Scripture. He bases his exegesis (radically opposed to modernist eschatologism) on the so-called "eschatological discourse" of Jesus regarding the destruction of Jerusalem (Gesù e la fine di Gerusalemme, [Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem], 1950) as well as on the exegesis of the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians (L'escatologia in San Paolo [*Eschatology in Saint Paul*], *1957). The article we publish is taken from his volume "Temi di esegesi"* [*Exegeses subjects*] *(1953) and was largely taken from the Dizionario biblico (1963) directed by Spadafora himself.*

The Antichrist

Mons. Francesco Spadafora

Antichrist means an opponent of Christ and his Kingdom. In all canonical and apocryphal literature, this term occurs only in the letters of Saint John.

In his discourse on the fall of Jerusalem, Jesus warns his disciples to beware of deceptions by which pseudo-Christs and pseudo-prophets will try to lure them; **1)** during the long period of persecution and tribulation that will precede the beginning of the sorrows (*Mt.* 24, 5, 11; *Mk.* 13, 6; *Lk.* 21, 9); and **2)** during the great storm (the siege) that will immediately precede the end (*Mt.* 24, 23 ff.; *Mk.* 13, 21 ff.).

Clear manifestations of which the historian Josephus speaks (*The Jewish War* II, 13, 4-5 before the revolt and the siege): "Deceitful men and impostors, who under the pretense of divine inspiration worked for procuring innovations, inducing the crowd to acts of fanaticism…" And (VI, 5, 2-3 during the siege): "There were then a great number of prophets who, suborned by tyrants regarding the people, were urging them to wait for help from God… Thus were the miserable people deluded… by those who spoke falsely in the name of God" (trans. G. Ricciotti: *La Guerra Giudaica* [*The Jewish War*]).

In 2 Thessalonians. 2:3-12 the description is detailed. "Let no man deceive you (the day of the Lord is almost imminent). First the apostasy must occur, the wicked one must be revealed, the lost one (or doomed to perdition), the adversary and haughty despiser of God and the Temple *(Dan.* 9: 36 ff.), to the point of settling in the Temple of God and proclaiming himself God (Ez. 28:2). = *Mt.* 24:15; *Mk.* 13: 14.

Do you not remember that when I was with you, I told you these things? And now you know that which withholdeth (τὸ κατέχον), so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work, only that he who now holdeth (ὁ κατέχων), does hold, until he shall be taken out of the way. And then that wicked one shall be revealed whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming (Mt. 24:29 ff.; *Mk.* 13:24 ff; *Lk.* 22:25 ff; the parousia *Mt.* 10:23; 26:64; *Mk.* 14:61 f.; *Lk.* 22:68 ff.); a manifestation accompanied by the power of Satan, by all kinds of miracles, signs, and lying wonders *(Mt.* 24:23 ff.; *Mk.* 13:21 ff.), and by all the deceptions of evil, for those who are perishing, because they did not accept the love the truth that would save them."

These were the Jews (as per the entire context of 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*), those who

rejected the Gospel; a just punishment for this refusal, concludes Saint Paul.

Saint Paul reiterates for the Thessalonians, fiercely persecuted by the Jews, Jesus' prophecy concerning the end of Jerusalem, which was to serve as a punishment for the Jewish persecution and a consolation for the Church *(Mt.* 24; A. Plummer, J. B. Orchard, D. Buzy)

There can be no mistake concerning the timing. The tremendous chastisement has the following precursory signs: 1) The apostasy foretold by Jesus (K. Staab, p. 42) in *Lk.* 28:8; *Mt.* 24:12 ff.; which was realized in the Church of Palestine in *Hebr.* 4:11; 6: 4 ff.; 10:26-31; 12:25; 2) The unhindered manifestation of hate and violence on the part of Judaism, the adversary of Christ and His kingdom (*1 Thess.* 2:15 ff.), during which the profanation of the Temple will occur through the contempt for every divine and human norm. The terms used are those from Dan. 11:36 ff concerning the profanation of the temple (carried out at that time by Antiochus Epiphanes) and Ez. 28:2 concerning their feeling of mad confidence in what was an ephemeral triumph.

The profanation of the Temple is the incontrovertible sign given by Jesus for the end of Jerusalem: "When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation (*Dan.* 9:17; 12:11) which was spoken by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place…" *Mt.* 24:15; *Mk.* 13:14; (J. Huby, *St. Marc, Verbum Salutis* 2, 21st edition, 1929, p. 343; F. Prat, J. C., II, p. 247; M. Dibelius, *An die Thess*., Tubinga 1937, p. 45). The zealots and their leaders will settle within the Temple (Josephus, *War*. V, 1-38, 98-105. 562-66), and commit massacres there.

This mystery of hatred and perversity was already operating as much as it could, and violent persecutions had claimed their victims. Rome, with its power (τὸ κατέχον), was there to keep the frenzied hatred of the Synagogue in check. For example, from 44 to 62 a.d., there was a truce of approximately 20 years, undoubtedly brought about by the Roman administration which had resumed governance of Judea. (G. Lebreton - G. Zeiller, *Storia della Chiesa*, Italian translation, 1, Turin 1927, p. 209, see p. 242). This hatred had its first eruption immediately after the rebellion in Rome (66 AD), with their refusal to sacrifice to the emperor, the flight of the wicked procurator

Sermon and Punishment of the Antichrist
(Luca Signorelli, Duomo of Orvieto)

Gessius Florus, and the defeat of the legate of Syria Cestius Gallus. The empire's representative (ὁ κατέχων) was thus sidelined. But this was the end, predicted by Jesus in the passages cited.

O. Cullmann (pp. 212 ff.) acknowledges that this interpretation (the Roman Empire and its representative) is the only one that respects the usage and the shift from the neuter (τὸ κατέχον indicating the impersonal function of the obstacle) to the masculine (ὁ κατέχων = the personal agent of that function). Furthermore, it is also the oldest; the interpretation of the Fathers, taken up, albeit with refinements and variations, by many exegetes. It is spoken of as an apostolic tradition.

But the Fathers projected both *Mt*. 24 (at least from v. 21 onward) and *2 Thess.* to mean the end of the world; and they considered the manifestation of the antichrist as a sign of the second and final physical coming of Jesus. There then emerges the easy objection: the Roman Empire disappeared and the antichrist did not appear. Objections that disoriented the exegetes, pushing them to try to find new ways, in vain, to the point of claiming that *2nd Thessalonians* is unintelligible.

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Everything becomes clear, however, if one sticks to the text and context of the entire letter (and of *1 Thess.*) and to the recognized and frequent literal references to Jesus' prophecy on the end of Jerusalem *(Mt.* 24: see C. Spicq in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 36 [1952] 166, note 53).

In 1 and 2 John, the Apostle repeatedly warns the faithful to beware of heretics who had long since appeared in the primitive Church, and who rose up against the mystery of Jesus as true God and true man. Saint John calls these heretics Antichrists. "Little children, it is the last hour (the last and definitive era which began with the coming of Jesus, as opposed to the periods of time that preceded and prepared it: *Isaiah* 2:2; *1 Corinthians* 10:11; *Galatians* 4:1-5; *Hebrews* 9:26); and just as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, so now, behold, many antichrists have already appeared... They went out from us, but they were not of us... Who is a liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father…" *(1 John 2:18-22*; and again 4:3). "Many seducers have gone out into the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh. This (who maintains that) is the seducer and the antichrist' *(2 John* 7)."

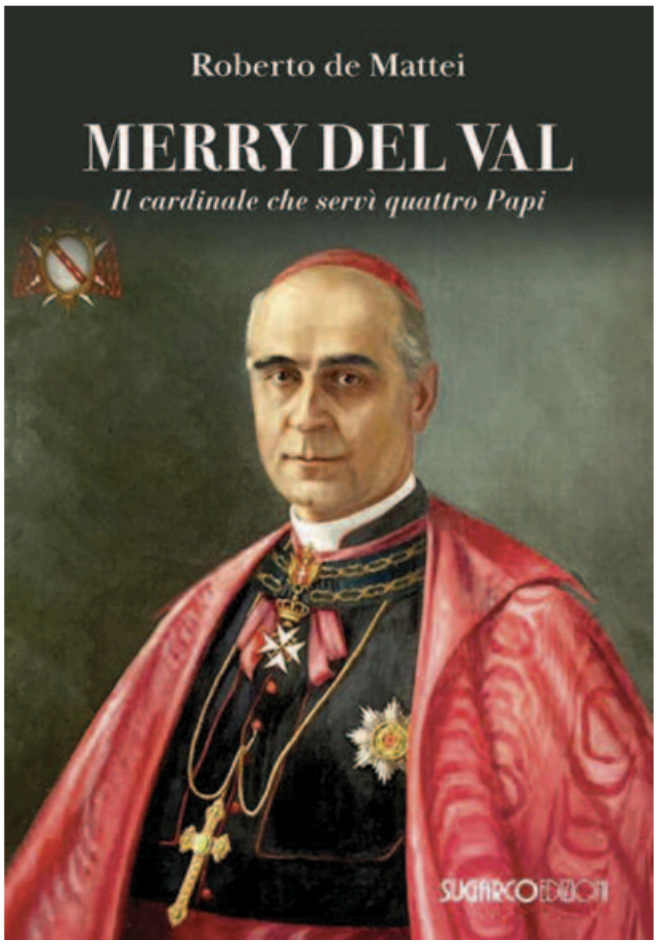
Finally, the *Apocalypse* unfolds the prophetic framework for the battle between Christ and the power of evil (Satan - Dragon, with his minions). Jesus' prophecy (*Mt. 24*) essentially states: in the violent, bloody and merciless struggle that Judaism will wage against the nascent Church, it will not be the Church that will succumb, but Judaism. That, however, was only an episode: the *Apocalypse* looking into an indefinite future, affirms that persecution will always accompany the Church, which will always emerge victorious and purified. It is not speaking, therefore, of a specific human individual or collective, nor of an action localized at a specific moment, nor at the end of the world. It is speaking about all the manifestations of evil, throughout the entire history of the Church, here below.

The theme of the eschatological Antichrist, whereby he is an individual (mainly found among the ancients, and among the moderns B. Rigaux) or a group of people (F. M. Allo, D. Buzy, the moderns), one who must immediately precede the physical return of Jesus at the end of the world, appears to be unfounded in biblical texts. The undue fusion of distinct themes examined in the various references above into a single subject, has facilitated this conception.

He who denies Jesus and opposes His Church is the Antichrist; whether it be an individual or a collective (State); all heretics and all persecutors of the past, present and future are the antichrist (=Saint John in his letters and in the Apocalypse). *Saint Matthew* and *2 Thessalonians* refer to the most ferocious enemy of the early Church: Judaism; they predict its persecutions, its ephemeral triumphs, its tremendous punishment.

Bibliography A. Romeo, *Enc. Catt.* It., I, coll. 1433-1441, with rich Bibliography.; B. Rigaux, *l'Antéchrist*, Gembloux - Paris 1932; D. Buzy, in *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, I, coll. 297-305; id., in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 24 (1934) 402-31; id., *La Sainte Bible* (L. Pirot. 12), Paris 1938, pp. 127-90; A. Brunot, in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, XV, coll. 573-610; O. Cullmann, in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 16 (1936) 210-45; J. B. Orchard, in Biblica 20 (1939) 172-79; Pietro de Ambroggi, *Le Epistole Cattoliche* (*La Sacra Bibbia*, S. Garofalo), 2a ed., Turin 1949, pp. 239-43. 257. 280; F. Spadafora, *Gesù e la fine di Gerusalemme*, Rovigo 1950, pp. 24-28. 38s. 45s. 74-77. 80-108.

A Biography of Cardinal Merry del Val



et's begin from the end: I strongly recommend our readers to purchase the latest historical essay by Roberto de Mattei, dedicated to Cardinal Merry del Val. No one is unaware of the doctrinal differences (in religious, and even "political" matters) that separate us from the Roman historian, but this doesn't prevent us from acknowledging his seriousness as a scholar, an always rare quality, especially in our times. The biography in question has as a subtitle: *Il cardinale che servì quattro Papi* [*The Cardinal who served four Popes*], although he was not vested as a Cardinal for the first of these Popes. The Popes in question were, of course, Leo XIII, Saint Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI. What immediately catches one's eye is his similarity (albeit with inevitable differences) with the figure of Monsignor Umberto Benigni, about whom we issued a defense in our special issue of *Sodalitium*. Practically the same age (Merry was born in 1865 and died in 1930, Benigni was born in 1862 and died in 1934), both began their ecclesiastical career under Leo XIII, both were highly appreciated by the Pontiff of Carpineto Romano to whom they owed the launch of their ascent in Rome. As to their differences, Raphael Merry del Val came from a noble Spanish family (of liberal Catholic tendencies) on his father's side, and a rich English family on the his mother's (the author, following the thinking of Corrêa de Oliveira, does not fail to highlight the aristocratic origin of many characters in his biography), by which he was, in education and formation, drawn to diplomatic life; while Monsignor Benigni came from a simple Umbrian family and always lived within limited means (but with great broad-mindedness!). Both figures later became devoted to the Holy Pontiff Pius X, who unexpectedly called upon Merry del Val to collaborate with him as Secretary of State, while Merry called upon Benigni to serve in the Secretariat of State and, with Pius X, approved Benigni's ingenious idea: the *Sodalitium Pianum* (despite there being differences between Benigni and Merry - not between Benigni and Pius X - which were not so much on principle but on practice). Both ended up serving the Church that they loved so much under the two following pontificates, being put however, in different ways! - on the margins of their government activities. Benigni was totally on the margins, it goes without saying. Merry del Val was placed in a prestigious and important position - that of Secretary of the Holy Office - where he played a role of no small importance, but he found himself always in opposition with the line of the new Secretary of State to both pontiffs, Cardinal Gasparri. The analogy with the Cardinal Rampolla affair is immediately obvious: Leo XIII's Secretary of State was removed from the Secretariship by Saint Pius X, who instead entrusted him with the Holy Office, even though he knew that Rampolla's inclinations along with his fellow "Rampollans" were certainly

not in accord with his directives; Benedict XV and Pius XI did the same thing, with the difference that Merry del Val, at the Holy Office, did not remain idle. In those years, Merry and Benigni, despite having very different positions and roles, were nonetheless part of, and in full harmony with, the "Pius X party," which sought to steer the Church's rudder back in the direction set by Pope Sarto. The attempt would certainly have succeeded, had Merry del Val been elected in the two conclaves of 1914 and especially 1922, during which he was genuinely a "papabile" candidate, even though he was not Italian. He was unable to participate in the 1939 conclave, having died unexpectedly on February 26, 1930, following a surgical operation. De Mattei, like many others, including, lastly, the undersigned, also seems to lean toward the hypothesis of murder, or at least does not entirely rule it out.

Since I am writing for the *Sodalitium* reader, it is not without interest to note the similarities between the theses defended by de Mattei in his essay (which also draws on archival sources) and my articles (which, unfortunately, do not draw on these sources, but only published ones). Such as in treating the unlikelihood of Cardinal Rampolla's membership in the O.T.O [Order of Oriental Temple] or Freemasonry in regard to the famous "veto" of the 1914 conclave (de Mattei on p. 107 cites the *Sodalitium* Issue n. 33 [instead it was n. 60, Ed.], while upon the Cardinal's death compromising documentation was found concerning modernism. And with regard to our debate with Radio Spada on the "Uranian" (homosexual) culture in Anglo-Catholicism (de Mattei cites our book "*La vergogna della tradizione*" ["*Shame of Tradition*"] on pages 188-189). And regarding the attempt by Father Curzio Nitoglia to "dissociate the figure of Monsignor Benigni from that of Saint Pius X and Cardinal Merry del Val", a thesis which was refuted "in a more than convincing manner" in the special issue of *Sodalitium*, n. 74 (as de Mattei states on page 222). And regarding the modernist infiltrations exemplified by the case of Father Primo Vannutelli, which de Mattei cites (p. 289) from *Sodalitium* n. 64. And finally, on the Brunatto case, regarding the unsavory role played by Father Rosa, and the innocence of Monsignor Benigni, on which de Mattei (p. 329) again cites our special issue. Even where *Sodalitium* is not referenced (which was not at all necessary, since the author had access to completely different sources), the author's judgment on that crucial historical period is often similar to ours (often, not always; for example I still note an excessive esteem for the Austrian Empire which, unfortunately, was no longer what it had been in the past), and even his not overlooking the scandalous "Gerlach case" (pp. 273-278).

I would also like to point out some (printing) errors that a proofreader should have eliminated: Sarajevo placed in Serbia (p. 242), Matzo's "wife" born in 1893 and died in 1891 (p. 289), Benedict XV died on April 22nd while later he is correctly said to have died on January 21st (p. 295), Giuseppe Rosa for Enrico Rosa (p. 239), the consecration of Bishop d'Herbigny by the Pope (Pius XI) while he was actually consecrated by Mons. Pacelli (pp. 316-317), Bonaiuti for Buonaiuti (p. 317), ufficiosi for officiosi (p. 331), transustansazione (p. 334), Pius X for Pius XI (several times, e.g. p. 368 note 1427, or p. 310, while it is corrected on p. 312). But these, obviously, are not fundamental errors, nor can I boast of greater precision since in my special issue, due to a material error in the date I cited, I have Marc Sangnier meet Benedict XV after the latter's death!

I am sorry, however, that the author, after having rightly recalled the role played by Cardinal Merry del Val, alongside St. Pius X in the condemnation of Associations of Worship (pp. 143 ff.), almost entirely omits the Cardinal's opposition to the Diocesan Associations approved under Pius XI (a few lines on p. 351 give some space for the question of the Action Française): the documents published by Poulat and cited in the special issue of *Sodalitium* are, in my opinion, of great interest (and entirely to the Cardinal's honor). On the other hand, the author does not avoid thorny issues: for example the presence of immorality in customs even among high prelates and their subsequent scandals, or the Jewish question. Finally, I am obviously sorry that John XXIII and his successors are defined as "Popes" and "Saints", but we

understand that from the author's point of view it cannot be otherwise, especially since a book presented at a conference organized by the Comitato Papa Pacelli-Associazione Pio XII, and in which the speakers were Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, Emilio Artiglieri, Attorney for the Holy See and Vice Postulator of the cause for the canonization of Pius XII, and Dr. Johan Ickx, Director of the Historical Archives of the Secretariat of State, Section for Relations with States, one cannot and must not appear too "irregular" if it is to achieve the beatification of Cardinal Merry del Val, in which the author has traced not only his public life but also - and rightly so - his spiritual life. As for me, I hope that if one day Cardinal Merry del Val will be raised to the honors of the altars, it will not happen by decree of some modernist whom he, in his life, would have abhorred and fought (see Mt. 23-29).

Father Francesco Ricossa

• **Roberto de Mattei**
Merry del Val. Il cardinale che servì quattro Papi.
Sugarco Edizioni, Milan 2024.

Two (serious) Books on Evolutionist Theory

Evolutionism (or, as was it was once called, transformism) is not only a theory about the origin of living species, but it is, at least de facto, and for most people, a kind of materialist "catechism" and an alternative to the Christian faith in a Creator God. For example, it is enough to consult the entry "Evolutionism" (belonging to the "secularism" category) at the website UAAR (Union of Rationalist Atheists and Agnostics), which, together with its magazine, *L'Ateo* [*The Atheist*], promotes "*Darwin Days*" throughout Italy against the Creation "myth".

Needless to say, the Atheists-Agnostics-Rationalists fight against the Church, but not without showing a little interested sympathy towards "Saint" John Paul II: "*The Catholic Church took a long time to come to terms with evolutionism. As late as 1950, the then Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical Humani Generis, compared creationism with evolutionism, harshly attacking the latter while reaffirming, at the same time, the historical existence of Adam and his role as progenitor, and therefore as the spreader of original sin (...).*

Progress was made only with the message that Karol Wojtyla sent to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on October 22, 1996. Although he started from Humani Generis, the pontiff recognized that evolutionism had become more than a mere hypothesis. Although he referred to 'theories' of evolution, rather than a single theory, this was because there exist 'materialistic, reductive and spiritualistic interpretations. Judgment here falls within the purview of philosophy and, even further, theology.' The pope did not specify how theologians could provide competent judgments in scientific matters."

In this review I limit myself to the exegetical and theological points of view on the question, and more particularly to the patristic one. In other words, we ask ourselves if an "evolutionist" interpretation can be possible from the scriptural account of Creation, according to which we might reconcile Divine Revelation with the Darwinist Theory, as John Paul II claimed.

In the just cited Encyclical *Humani generis*, Pius XII clarified that the following are revealed truths of Faith: "monogenism" (meaning the descent of all human beings from a first couple, through whom original sin was transmitted) and the direct creation of the soul by God. Meanwhile he reserved to the Church the decision on another question: the infusion of the soul created by God into organic or inorganic matter. The first hypothesis could be reconciled - within these limits - with the theory of evolution. In this regard, two books have been recently published (one in Italian, the other in French) which we have defined in our title as "serious", which is not always the

case in anti-evolutionist literature, often influenced by a fundamentalism of Protestant origin which has influenced many Catholic "traditionalists". The first volume is actually a reprint of a text from 1948 from the exegete and theologian Ernesto Ruffini, Archbishop of Palermo (1945) and Cardinal (1946); our *Centro Librario* reprinted it in 2023, edited by Father Ugolino Giugni, entitled *La teoria dell'Evoluzione secondo la scienza e la Fede* [*Evolutionist Theory according to science and Faith*]. The second volume, also published in 2023, by *Quentin Moreau éditeur* is a work by Anne-Edgar Wilke, an alumnus of the prestigious *École normale supérieure*: *Regard de la foi sur l'évolution. L'origine de l'homme d'après les Pères de l'Église* [*A Faith-Based Perspective on Evolution: The Origin of Man According to the Fathers of the Church.*]

After an introduction on the interventions of the ecclesiastical magisterium, the author examines the testimonies of 19 Fathers of the Church, concluding with the relevant doctrine of Saint Thomas. The author, who unfortunately is unfamiliar with the work of Cardinal Ruffini, authoritatively presents the Fathers' unanimous thinking on the subject. Anne-Edgar Wilke's work deserves to be complemented by reading her response to the *Vincent Ferrier Fraternity* magazine, *Sedes Sapientiæ* (https://foi-evolution.fr/blog/reponse-a-sedes-sapientiae/), founded by Father Louis-Marie de Blignières. Back in 2008, Father de Blignières published an article (*Un regard thomiste sur l'évolution*, in *Sedes Sapientiæ*, n. 106) in which he defended the concordist hypotheses according to which, in the creation of man, God would have used pre-existing organic matter (i.e., the body of an animal). In the same journal (n. 166 December 2023), Father Albert-Marie Crignon reviewed Wilke's book, raising various objections to Wilke's patristic argument, which the latter brilliantly refutes in the aforementioned response published on his website. It is interesting to note that both Father de Blignières and Father Crignion intend, in this way, to defend the "magisterium" of "Saint" John Paul II, that is, the "step forward", so welcomed by the Association of Italian Atheists.

• **Ernesto Ruffini**
La Teoria dell'Evoluzione secondo la scienza e la fede
C.L.S. Verrua Savoia 2023 € 15,00.

Apparently, the crux of the matter that divides and opposes Wilke and Father Crignion concerns the theological criteria for evaluating whether or not there exists a unanimous consensus among the Fathers on this issue, enough to be considered an echo of Divine Revelation. The issue is, in fact, a delicate one, and the reader can evaluate the arguments for and against by reading Wilke's response to Father Crignion's review. In reality, however, the crux of the matter is only "apparently" evaluating the consensus of the Fathers; the true reason that moved Father Crignon to criticize Wilke's thesis (which is also that of Cardinal Ruffini) is another: the defense of the teaching of John Paul II according to which evolutionism is no longer a mere hypothesis, but a scientific certainty. Wilke has an easy time reminding Father de Blignières and his confreres of the many and authoritative writings that Father de Blignières published, when he was still a follower of the *Thesis of Cassiciacum*, against the doctrine of John Paul II, before joining the motu proprio *Ecclesia Dei* of Wojtyla's memory. Unlike

the Society of Saint Pius X (either the Écône version or the Resistance version, it matters little), according to Father de Blignières "*recognizing*" (the legitimacy of the occupants of the Apostolic See) does not go hand in hand with "*resisting*", but with obeying, as is normal: even at the cost of counting an orangutan or a chimpanzee as founders of the noble Le Barbier de Blignières family.

As for us, not having such ancestors, nor that "saint" in our calendar, we can only recommend the work of Ruffini to the Italian reader and Wilke's to the French-speaking reader.

Father Francesco Ricossa

• **Anne-Edgar Wilke**
Regard de la foi sur l'évolution - L'origine de l'homme d'après les Pères de l'Église. La théorie de l'évolution est-elle compatible avec la Foi ?
Quentin Moreau € 12,00.

The Reverend…Sandokan

Few people know that Sandokan was inspired by the chronicles of a real life adventurer, the Catholic priest Carlos Cuarteroni.

Everyone knows the Piedmontese romance novelist Emilio Salgari and the adventures that sprung from his imagination, set in every possible and imaginable exotic place in the world and in time. It is said that Salgari "lived in the library", because he never visited the places he described with the greatest verisimilitude, but he relied on accounts of those who had been there, which he found in libraries. Few know that his most famous character, Sandokan, was inspired by the chronicles of a real life adventurer, the Catholic priest Carlos Cuarteroni, a portrait of whom may be taken from a biography written by Alicia Castellanos Escudier, *Cuarteroni y los piratas malayos (1816-1880)* (Silex, Madrid 2004).

Carlos Domingo Antonio Genaro Cuarteroni was born in Cadiz on September 19, 1816 to a deeply Catholic family. His father was Italian and his mother was Spanish. The fourth of nine children, as a baby he loved to listen to tales of the mariners, to watch the ships and scan the sea. He completed the necessary schooling for a naval career in a private school, and at thirteen he made his first voyage embarking on a merchant ship headed for Manila, whose route was among one of the most dangerous of all the oceans until the Suez Canal was opened in 1869. He returned to Europe after two years, obtained the grade of

Carlos Cuarteroni, a young naval officer

"third pilot" and in little time that of "second pilot": at the age of only nineteen years he completed voyages to Spain, the Philippines, China and India, and already by 1841 he had accumulated the experience necessary to become a ship's captain.

At this point, in Manila in 1842, the young Carlos accomplished an act that no one had expected: he left his secure job in the navy (although the merchant marine was less prestigious than the military, at that time the mercantile ships were armed almost as much as war ships, and navigated in great convoys to defend themselves from pirates), acquired a schooner which he renamed *Tonkin Martyrs*, and took a stab at being a pearl and turtle fisherman in the China Sea; a mysterious step because it meant renouncing his career, because by doing so he was leaving behind a secure salary to put himself into the hands of fate, and because now as he sailed in the pirate-infested seas, he was no longer protected by Spanish canons!

But those who knew the young man's soul intimately shouldn't have been surprised: he had already distinguished himself for the compassion he showed toward the crews of Spanish ships and the personnel at coastal stations, who, when they lost their lives to storms or pirates, had often been months away from receiving the sacraments. His sensitivity and resourcefulness might therefore have suggested that Cuarteroni, in taking this step, was plotting something.

And indeed, the crew members under his command soon realized it: their captain had been using pearl fishing to…study the coastlines and seabeds, to draw maps, and to get lost in calculations of currents and winds. Imagine their surprise when one day, following Cuarteroni's instructions, instead of pearls, they fished out silver ingots transported by an English ship that had sunk years earlier!

But was the young man's goal to become rich? Let us listen to his own words: "*Having acquired these riches, I retired to Europe to rest. But in society and in the peaceful and delicate life, I did not find the joy and inner peace that I experienced during my travels; and even less could*

Cuarteroni as an elderly man

I put to good use the knowledge that I had acquired in Oceania. As for forgetting the misfortunes of those groaning under the chains of Muslim slavery, let us not even mention it…" And so "*I offered the whole of the treasure that fell to me to God.*" And indeed we then find him in Hong Kong in 1846, where he purchased another ship on which he embarked on exploratory voyages along the coasts of Borneo, seeking the most favorable location to establish a Catholic mission. The islands were inhabited by indigenous peoples, and the coasts had a few European stations; the problem was the Muslims who populated the coasts, who practiced slavery against the former and piracy against the latter (but not only piracy: the Muslims carried out numerous kidnappings of Europeans to extort trade treaties favorable to their sultanates). He settled on previously unknown islands, alone, with natives, and with pirates; he began by freeing dozens of slaves at his own expense.

At 34 years old, he returned to Europe, studied for five years, and was ordained by the Pope himself to whom he revealed his own plan, theoretical and practical (all at his own expense), to implant Catholic missions in Malesia, where there already existed synagogues, mosques, pagodas, protestant temples, but only the ruins of

Catholics churches, memories of ancient, abandoned missions… Appointed Apostolic Vicar to Borneo with Episcopal faculties, in 1855 he left once again for the other side of the world after visiting his family; he would see them again only a few days before dying, almost thirty years later! And so, off to Oceania, with two priests who had volunteered to be his companions, and with the task of also covering the eastern coast of Australia (which was then experiencing a gold rush). The center of his operations was the island of Labuan, which Salgari would choose as the setting for some of Sandokan's adventures.

Bishop Cuarteroni always had to guard against the snares of the Muslim Sultans and pirates (Muslims even more radical than the Sultans), who in neighboring Indonesia persecuted and martyred Catholics, burning their churches and enslaving them; he also had to guard against the English colonial authorities, and, at times, against the Europeans who were interested only in trade and not religion: especially Spain, which never availed itself of Monsignor Cuarteroni's experience for the social and economic progress of the colonies, nor to assist him in religious advancement. And then there were earthquakes, epidemics, interminable negotiations with the authorities, the cunning of the colonial powers (the United Kingdom, the United States, Italy, Germany) who grabbed territories, even taking them away from the mission; having to live on handouts due to the mysterious disappearance of 400,000 reals that he had left in deposit with Propaganda Fide for the mission's needs (probably seized by the Italian government after the occupation of Rome in 1870; Amedeo of Savoy, who presumably knew something, sent the Philippine mission a very modest offering). The apostolate was a continuous voyage: the Philippines, in fact, encompassed thousands of islands and innumerable coral reefs; he was also exhausted from continuous attacks of malaria, and his health worsened. But as we know, the good Lord, along with thorns, bestows consolations: and so we cannot forget the countless conversions to Catholicism, the freedom given to thousands of slaves and the help given to dozens of shipwrecked people, for whom the mission, and therefore Jesus Christ, meant hope; the light of the Gospel brought into a society where brutality and opium made the rules; the help of sincere Catholics like the European confreres, the many indigenous catechists, and his own family, who from near and far never abandoned him. His balm and his strength came from God: Monsignor Cuarteroni recognized in the storms that forced him to change course "*the guidance of the guardian angel, and so we navigated our adventures with him; and he led us to the point where our material and spiritual assistance was most needed*." No typhoon, difficulty, or pirate instilled fear in him: he was a "chaplain of sea and land".

In 1879 , the final pain: having to abandon the land of his labors, leaving it uncertain about its future. To some, it might seem like a "journey home" to Europe; for him, it was instead "a journey with no return to the Philippines."

Carlos Cuarteroni was gifted by God the ability to learn languages, great communication skills, the courage to reach the most remote ports to negotiate with pirates or dangerous tribesmen, but above all, a great love for the glory of God and the salvation of his brothers, a love that led him across the endless seas and unknown forests. After years of work, his diaries and his maps constituted a treasure for science, but above all, his priestly ministry, filled with hard work and love of God, constituted a treasure for heaven…

The life of Carlos Cuarteroni was one of exploration, dedication, adventure and Christian virtue, a life that serves as an example to both young and old: at 64, the age in which he died, he seemed like an old corsair, like the characters in Salgari's novels; and indeed he had been: but a "corsair of God", on an adventure for his Lord.

Father Piergiorgio Coradello

- **Alicia Castellanos Escudier**
  Cuarteroni y los piratas malayos (1816-1880)
  Silex, Madrid 2004.

Institute Life

From March 16 2024 to June 30 2025

• San Pietro Martire Seminary. Sacred Orders

Bishop Stuyver visited the Seminary in Verrua and on October 17, 2024 he conferred the tonsure and two minor orders on two seminarians. On October 18, he conferred the subdiaconate on Vincent Gastin and Louis-Marie Chuilon. The two subdeacons went on to receive their Diaconate in Dendermond on April 29, 2025 and will be ordained priests during 2025. On June 14, 2025 at Nîmes, the Bishop conferred the subdiaconate on brother Benoît Dezitter of the *Stella Maris* community, who studies at the seminary in Verrua Savoia.

• The Institute, Mother House and daughter houses…

The work of reconstruction was (almost) completed in Verrua which allowed us to have eight new rooms and two large dormitories to easily accommodate children for school camps. Beginning in March 2025, Father Frank Sauer is our welcome guest in Verrua. Ordained a priest by Archbishop Lefebvre on July 1, 1984, he participated many times in the Exercises for priests held in Verrua. Recently he replaced Father Trauner in Altenburg, Austria, his last residence before coming to Italy. At Raveau, the work of renovating the rooms in the "dépendances" continues every year, but it is not yet finished.

• Sisters of the Institute: two important events are to be reported in the life of the sisters of the Institute. On April 27, 2024, Sister Giovanna di Gesù took her perpetual vows, irrevocably consecrating her life to the service of her divine Spouse Jesus and to the salvation of souls; Sister Francesca del Sacro Cuore and Sister Consolata della Sacra Famiglia pronounced for the first time their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, awaiting their own consecration also with perpetual vows.

Ordinations in Verrua:
minor orders conferred on October 17, 2024
and the subdiaconate on October 18, 2024

On January 18, 2025, the Sisters of the Institute opened a house in Belgium, alongside the already existing Institute House, to lend their assistance to Bishop Stuyver and Father Steenbergen who have resided for years in Dendermonde. The new House was named Santa

Religious vows on October 27, 2024

One of the new rooms built in the attic space in Verrua

Lutgarda, a holy Flemish religious, the Patroness of Flanders, distinguished for her devotion to the Sacred Heart. Whether in Italy, Belgium or France, the Sisters remain strictly united in charity, striving to put into practice these words of their Rule: "they will seek their own perfection and the well-being of others, especially by helping to minister to the priests of the Mater Boni Consilii Institute." They are continually engaged in catechism instruction for girls and young women, with in-person catechism classes in the Institute's chapels closest to the convent, and with the support of the online catechism school for girls living further away, along with camps, small retreats, and training conferences. The fall season in particular has been packed with activities for girls, with monthly camps, organized in Verrua, and one for French girls in Raveau on the occasion of All Saints' Day (from October 25th to November 1st, 2024).

• Summer activities. Camps and Eucaristic Crusades

Like every year, the **Camp at Raveau**, placed under the protection of **Saint Aloysius Gonzaga,** welcomed 50 boys from the ages of 8 to 13 years old in July 2024. It is an opportunity for the children to spend their vacations in the spirit of the Eucharistic Crusade, growing in love with Our Lord Jesus Christ through prayer, daily communion, and a spirit of sacrifice. We visited the Boutissant animal park, where we admired the deer, bison and goats. During the same period, as every year (June-July 2024 and June 2025), summer camps for girls and young women organized by the Sisters of the Institute were held in Verrua Savoia; many young women attended.

From July 29, 2024 to August 9, 2024, in Valle d'Aosta, the Saint John Bosco Camp was held, which reunited about 35 young French and Italian boys from ages 14 to 20 to scale the peaks of the Alps. The boys were lodged in dormitories of a holiday camp belonging to a Catholic organization; thus at dawn, they were in better shape to face the splendid alpine peaks up to 3000 meters of altitude, with differences in levels reaching 1400 meters (even inevitable blistered feet didn't impede anyone's enthusiasm and good will!). Each evening, the boys attended a brief conference of apologetics to learn how to explain, demonstrate, and defend their own faith with competence and efficacy. The experience shows that this camp, which combines physical effort, spiritual formation and Catholic friendship, helps many young adolescents and adults to persevere in their faith at an age when the pressures and temptations of the world are unfortunately not lacking! From July 10 to 28, 2024, the Sisters of Christ the King organized the camp in the Southern Alps, in the Dauphiné region, which was attended by two priests from the Institute.

• Special Activities in various nations

In **Croatia**, Mass was celebrated once a month in Zagreb (Croatia), where the number of faithful has remained stable. A young Croat entered the seminary in Verrua in September 2024. Pastoral visits to **Romania** (Cluj-Napoca) continue

The house for the Sisters in Belgium

Activities of the I.M.B.C. Sisters

A camp for young girls took place in Raveau

In Verrua the procession for Corpus Christi 2025

on a quarterly basis. In **Hungary**, the Spiritual Exercises are offered in a sporadic way to a few people. The work of the Spiritual Exercises being so important, the transformation of the property in Felcsút, intended for this purpose, is also in the planning phase.

France. On November 1, 2024, a spiritual retreat was held in Raveau: 160 people participated on this day to find renewed fervor in their spiritual life. Two priests and several nuns were present. The young girls had the opportunity to prepare a short play on the life of Saint Cecilia. On May 30, 2025, a hike took place near the Grande Chartreuse; good weather allowed us to climb to the Grand Som, a peak in the Chartreuse massif in the Isère department. This day offered many young people the opportunity to gather in a mountain setting to share a convivial moment, but also to uplift their souls through determination, mutual support, and obedience to the safety rules required to fully enjoy the day. All of this invites us to meditate on that path to Heaven that sometimes seems so difficult, but which—as the hikers themselves would say—is not impossible!

Since Father Guépin's death in February 2023, we have responded to the request of the Daughters of Wisdom in Brittany, ensuring the regular visit of a priest as confessor to the nuns, at least once a month. The IMBC expanded its apostolate to **Toulouse** in March 2024. We began

with a Mass every two months, and since the end of 2024 we have been celebrating Mass there once a month. The project is progressing, and we are already seeing spiritual fruits for the new little flock (several general confessions, one adult baptism, and five confirmations in 2024). In November 2024, the IMBC also began visiting Normandy, celebrating Mass near **Caen**, where we are currently going irregularly (one Sunday a month or every two months, depending on our availability). We pray for these new fields of apostolate. You can find the dates of the next Masses in Toulouse and Caen on our website.

Some news about the chapel in **Paris**: on May 20, 2024, a group set out to discover the religious history of Sens Cathedral, so important in the history of France (it is the first Gothic cathedral of a diocese that was superior to Paris until 1622: the Archbishop of Sens was called the "second Pope" in the Middle Ages, and Pope Alexander III indeed took refuge there when he was expelled by the emperor). Our traditional torchlight procession in Montmartre for the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 2024) once again brought together more than 150 devout faithful who sang the praises of Mary all the way to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart: "Ad Jesum per Mariam!"

Several outings were organized for the children of the chapel, with the help of some young people, in the spirit of the Eucharistic Crusade and our summer camps. As for Masses celebrated in the Île-de-France region, our Oratory in the 15th arrondissement is increasingly popular during the week, and we also occasionally celebrate Sunday evening Masses in the western Paris region, thanks to the generosity of a family, which started in October 2023.

And finally, the Paris chapel is preparing to celebrate its 20th anniversary in a few months, in January 2026: the pastor and the Parisian faithful ask you to join them in giving thanks to God. The **Le Mans** chapel is also celebrating anniversaries: 10 years of the IMBC apostolate in the Le Mans region (begun in the spring 2015) and 5 years of our chapel. Deo gratias!

On May 17, 2025 Bishop Stuyver blessed the new reconstructed chapel at Serre-Nerpol, as the former one had serious structural problems. It is a ceremony in which the blessing of the external walls, the singing of the Litany of the Saints, and then the blessing of the internal walls are particularly noteworthy. In his homily, the Bishop thanked everyone who cooperated in this work, recalling that the chapel is the house of God and the gateway to Heaven, and that even though heaven and earth cannot contain the Lord, He deigns to come and dwell in this abode. Recalling some words spoken by Father Vinson when the previous chapel was inaugurated, the Monsignor concluded: “I declare... I mandate that the Mass celebrated in this chapel be the Mass according to the integral rite of St. Pius V and that the names of the 'pseudo-popes' not be mentioned in the Canon of the Mass.”

Switzerland. Bishop Stuyver's visit to Servion for the Confirmations on September 28, 2024, was a beautiful occasion both for the grace bestowed upon the confirmed and because most of the people remained together for refreshments in the afternoon, ensuring a moment of fraternal closeness, despite the fact that it was a terrible ordeal for the bishop (his plane was cancelled the day before the ceremony, he "slept" at the airport, left very early in the morning, and then took the plane back that afternoon to return to Belgium that evening).

Italy. We note the increase in the Masses in **Potenza** and **Modugno**. The monthly Mass in the Province of **Pistoia** continues to be celebrated in an ancient family chapel in the commune of Cantagrillo; we renew our dearest thanks to the proprietor who granted us this possibility. **In Umbria**: Monthly Mass has become a regular event, celebrated alternately in San Terenziano, in the municipality of **Gualdo Cattaneo**, and in **Gualdo Tadino**. Mass was held on July 25 and October 7, also in Pecorone, in the municipality of **Castel Giorgio** (TR), at the Tenuta Valverde

estate. In **Sicily,** at the Chapel of the Madonna del Buon Consiglio, Father Fraschetti has celebrated monthly Mass in **Santa Croce Camerina** (RG) since November 2019, thanks to the availability of the owner, Miss Gueli. Sunday, November 10 marked the fifth anniversary of our Institute's presence in Sicily. Thank you! In **Rovereto**, Trentino, we have obtained all the necessary permits from the Superintendency of Fine Arts and the Municipality to build a gallery at the Church of Sant'Ignazio to provide more seating: work should begin soon. In **Milan**, at the Oratory of St. Ambrose, we recall the short retreats for Advent on December 7, 2024, and for Lent on March 8, 2025. In **Bologna**, the day before Palm Sunday, the Stations of the Cross are traditionally held, which for the past two years has taken place at the Certosa di Bologna.

• Conferences

On Sunday September 29, 2024, Father Coradello presented a small conference in **Budapest** on infallibility, and on January 26, 2025 on the history of the Institute. Again in Hungary, on March 1, 2025 a half-day conference was held by Father Trauner. On that day he explained how the current problem afflicting the Church dates back to the days of the Second Vatican Council and to the modernism that it spread. About 30 people participated and the conference was distributed in an online video. Conferences and instructions take place regularly at the chapel in **Budakeszi**, while the children are catechized by the Sisters of the Institute and the seminarians.

On December 1, 2024, a day of study was held in Paris, this year on the theme of the Jewish question from a theological point of view, with three conferences: "*Israel in the Old and New Testament - the Magisterium and the discipline of the Church towards the Israelites in Christianity - the modernist change before, during and after the Second Vatican Council.*" It is possible to find these conferences as well as those of years past on our Youtube channel or through our internet site (the Document section, then Conferences).

The Day for the Social Kingship of Christ in Vignola 2024

The twentieth edition of the Conference of Albertarian Studies in 2024

• The Federici & Albertario Study Centers

The Giornata di Cristo Re in **Vignola** (MO) - The 17th edition of the giornate per la Regalità sociale di Cristo [Day of the Social Kingship of Christ] ("*The veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom*", Vignola October 12, 2024) on the Jewish Question was very positive, primarily due to the quality of the seminar led by Father Francesco Ricossa. The speaker presented the topic of Judaism with rigor and clarity, remaining grounded in the teachings of Sacred Scripture and the magisterium of the Popes, without giving room to human passions linked to current events, often determined from the lack of adequate doctrinal formation. The numerous participants (at least 150), by their attentiveness, demonstrated their appreciation for the lectures and the overall atmosphere, such as the lunch and

the impressive display of books and magazines. There was also a stall featuring olive wood items produced by Christian artisans in Bethlehem. The three lectures can be heard on the *Sodalitium* Youtube channel.

On November 16, 2024 in **Milan**, the **Convegno di Studi Albertariani** [Albertarian Studies Conference], was held, now in its twentieth year. The theme was: "*Crisis in the Church? Modernism and Traditionalism, Sede Vacante, and the Council. The Position of the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii on the crisis the Church is experiencing today*" It consisted, as always, in two presentations by Father Francesco Ricossa, entitled "*Knowing the Past to Understand the Present: A Brief History of the Catholic Reaction to the Conciliar and the Post-Conciliar Reforms*" and "*Catholic Doctrine Compared with Contemporary Theories on Sede Vacante.*" The conference provided some clarity on the various theological positions in the response to the crisis the Church is experiencing. Many people in attendance were also able to take advantage of the press stand, which also sold a variety of Holy Land items. As always, the presentations can be heard on the *Sodalitium* Youtube channel.

• Spiritual Exercises

The preaching of the Spiritual Exercises to the faithful is an important part of the apostolate of our Institute in Italy and France, to which is also added Belgium and Hungary. Following is the list of the retreats. In Verrua, August 2024 (18 women and 22 men as retreatants); from January 1 to 6, 2025 (mixed session, 15 retreatants). In France at the Maison Saint-Joseph: in February 2024 (20 men); April 2024 (19 women); July (mixed session, 21 retreatants); August (7 women and 14 men). In Raveau in August 2024 (21 men and 22 women). In September at the Maison Saint-Joseph for the sisters (40 sisters of *Cristo Re, Stellamarine,* and the Congregation of *La Sagesse*, for religious at Nîmes and for priests and seminarians in Verrua; December 2024 (mixed session, 21 retreatants). At Maison Saint-Joseph in February 2025 (19 men); April (16 women); and July 25 (mixed session, 22 retreatants). A total of approximately 336 people followed the Spiritual Exercises. The retreat days for perseverance took place as is now traditional: in Serre-Nerpol on February 25, 2024, and March 9, 2025, and in Raveau on November 1 of each year. This year, the participation was a large one.

• Pilgimages

On April 20, 2024, the Oratory of Rome organized a pilgrimage to **Fossanova** (LT), on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the death of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Rosary was recited in the cell where the Angelic Doctor died, followed by the celebration of Holy Mass in the chapel of Palazzo Gizzi in **Ceccano** (FR). Special thanks go to Stefano Gizzi, Attorney, and Dr. Salomone, the owner of the building.

Pilgrimage to Loreto – The 19th edition (May 11 and 12, 2024) was, humanly speaking, decidedly positive. Approximately 230 people

Pilgrimage to Prague (November 2024)

20th edition of the pilgrimage to Loreto in 2025

The cake for the event

participated. All those present honored Our Lady during the month dedicated to her with the complete Rosary and visits to the Holy House, as well as with devotion in prayer, generosity in walking, and kindness in relationships with others. Almost everyone received the sacraments: these are the most important aspects for both Christian life and eternal life.

On June 15, 2024, there was a pilgrimage of Lombard faithful accompanied by Father Coradello to the sanctuary of **Caravaggio** (approximately 28 people attended).

On Saturday, August 17, 2024, the annual pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of la **Madonna delle Grazie di Boccadirio** (BO) took place. A large number of faithful from various regions participated, including some from as far away as Veneto.

On September 7, 2024, the traditional pilgrimage to **Pontmain** took place, bringing together numerous faithful around two IMBC priests for the procession, singing, and the rosary in the afternoon. Some were also able to attend Holy Mass in our chapel in Le Mans that morning.

From November 21 to 24, 2024, the **Infant Jesus of Prague pilgrimage** (Czech Republic) took place, with two priests in attendance (Fr. Coradello and Fr. Fraschetti). A total of 42 pilgrims attended.

On October 26, 2024, the regional pilgrimage for the faithful from Lombardy and Piedmont to the **Sacro Monte di Crea** took place. After a delicious convivial lunch and under pouring rain, led by Fr. Giugni, about forty faithful prayed the Holy Rosary along the chapels.

Each year, the Oratory of Pescara organizes two pilgrimages in Abruzzo to rekindle the devotion of participants: the 23rd edition was held on October 26, 2024, at the **Holy Face in Manoppello** (PE) and during Lent, on February 22, 2025, at the **Scala Santa in Campli** (TE).

The 20th edition of the Institute's pilgrimage to **Loreto** took place on May 17-18, 2025: 250 faithful of all ages (with attendees from France, Germany, and Hungary, transforming the pilgrimage to Loreto from a national... to an international one!) marched reciting prayers and songs from Castelfidardo to Loreto. Saturday afternoon was dedicated to confessions and personal devotion in the Holy House. In the evening, after dinner, the twentieth anniversary celebrations were a must: a delicious and "Marian"

Activities of the Eucharistic Crusade

Camp for boys in Verrua Savoia

Summer Camp in Raveau

Camp for boys in the mountains of Valgrisanche (Valle d'Aosta) 2024

five-tier cake, a remembrance of the benefactors, and of the good transmitted and received during twenty years of pilgrimage made this event special.

Sunday began with Holy Mass and the return to Castelfidardo and then to Osimo, to pray to Saint Joseph of Cupertino for our students (seminarians and young faithful). The constant prayer, the sacrifice of the journey and the march, the sacraments, the closeness of the priests, the healthy conviviality because it is Catholic, make the pilgrimage a powerful and privileged channel of grace from the good God.

On June 21, 2025, a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the *Blessed Virgin of Corbetta* (near Milan) for the faithful from Lombardy, about forty people attended.

We highlight here the various pilgrimages made in France by the communities of Raveau and Lyon. On March 11, 2024: a pilgrimage to **Valfleury** (near Lyon) for the Way of the Cross during Lent. On June 15, 2024: pilgrimage to Sainte-Solange. On November 23, 2024: pilgrimage to **Our Lady of the Children**, in Château Neuf-sur-Cher – to pray and entrust the Christian education of children to the Blessed Virgin Mary. November 30, 2024: Again, pilgrimage to **Valfleury** – recitation of the Rosary on the hill representing the different mysteries of the Rosary, in suffrage for the souls in purgatory.

On March 29, 2025: a pilgrimage to **Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire**. May 31, 2025: pilgrimage to **Ars** on the occasion of the centenary of the canonization of the holy Curé. June 28, 2025: a pilgrimage to Lyon, on the feastday of Saint Irenaeus.

On May 19, 2024, the feast of Pentecost, about 80 faithful from the south of France gathered (in the presence of the Reverends Cazalas and Andriantsarafa and two Stellamarine Brothers) for the annual pilgrimage to **Our Lady of Grace** and **Saint Joseph of Bessillon**, near Cotignac, in the Var region. It was a day of prayer and also of Christian friendship, always much appreciated by

Feast of Corpus Christi in Verrua Savoia: the little girls

the faithful. Holy Mass was sung outdoors, on the sanctuary esplanade, and after a picnic, the pilgrims walked the few kilometers that separate the two sites of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary (in 1519) and of Saint Joseph (140 years later), meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary and singing hymns to ask for graces from the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph, protector and heavenly patron of the Holy Church.

On June 8th, also on the feast of Pentecost, the 2025 edition of the same pilgrimage to **Our Lady of Grace,** near **Cotignac** with about eighty faithful, participated in the open-air sung Mass and prayed and implored the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, who appeared in those places.

On April 26, 2025, one hundred and fifty pilgrims had the grace of venerating the **Holy Tunic** of Our Lord in **Argenteuil** during the extraordinary exposition. The pilgrimage organized by the Sisters of Christ the King to **Notre-Dame de l'Osier** with the participation of our priests has now become a traditional event; let us remember the dates: May 12, 2024 and May 8, 2025.

On June 9, 2025, a group of pilgrims went to Normandy to visit the **Rouen** Cathedral: a visit that once again powerfully nourished their faith in the school of Church history; there was also a moment of reflection at the site of the agony of Saint Joan of Arc. On June 16, 2025, about thirty

Feast of Corpus Christi in Verrua Savoia: the clergy

faithful were able to discover or rediscover the **Sainte-Chapelle in Paris**.

A pilgrimage also took place in **Switzerland** on October 12, 2024, to **Saint-Ursanne**, where Abbé Fringueli and the faithful of his chapel joined Father Murro and Father Langlet with the faithful of Servion.

• Other means of communication (Radio interviews)

• Collaboration with the Catholic formation website "*True Restoration Radio*". For many years, Father Trauner collaborated with an English-speaking site for Christian formation. Our confrere covered a wide range of topics, ranging from the history of the twenty Ecumenical Councils and the Second Vatican Council, to the exposition of Sacred Scripture, to the discussion of the book *Iota Unum*, which shows the disastrous consequences of Vatican II and its spirit, that is, modernism, on spiritual life. Recently, recordings of conferences have been undertaken according to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

New translations have been published on our website, in English (with several complete issues of *Sodalitium*), Spanish, Czech, Polish, and the new sections for Portuguese and Hungarian. We sincerely thank the generosity of our translator friends.

• The Institute and the Press

The Association "*Il Maccabeo*" of Pescara interviewed Father Carandino on the situation of Christians living in the Holy Land, translated and published also in French. The controversial (and questionable) journalist Andrea Cionci dedicated a video to "*La Vergogna della Tradizione*": *il libro choc di don Ricossa sul gayfriendlysmo di Radio Spada* ["*The Shame of Tradition*": *Father Ricossa's shocking book on Radio Spada's gay-friendliness.*] On February 5, 2025, in the *Corrispondenza Romana*, Roberto de Mattei wrote an article "*Cristina Campo e il mondo della Tradizione*" ["*Christina Campo and the world of Tradition*"] in which in addition to recalling his personal acquaintance with E. Zolla and C. Campo, he highlighted Father Ricossa's book "*Cristina Campo, o l'ambiguità della Tradizione*" ["*Cristina Campo, or the Ambiguity of Tradition*"]. Father Hector Romero's Spanish-language magazine *Integrismo* always publishes numerous translations of *Sodalitium* articles in each issue. *Duc in altum*, Aldo Maria Valli's blog, published "*Una bella proposta editoriale/La Storia sociale della Chiesa di Mons. Benigni*" ["*A Beautiful Editorial Proposal/The Social History of the Church by Bishop Benigni*"] on November 23, 2024, along with our preface to the latest volume (taken from the press releases of the Giuseppe Federici Cultural Center: essential for following our activities).

• The Centro librario Sodalitium (new publications)

Through our contacts in Bethlehem, this year the Centro Librario can provide assistance to the artisans of the Holy Land through sales of nativity scenes and other wooden crafts in our chapels and oratories and on our website (in a specific section https://www.sodalitiumshop.it/product-category/terra-santa/). For them it is a true breath of fresh air

Father Carandino on the Pilgrimage to Loreto, 2024 edition

that allows them to survive in these times when the Land of Jesus is ravaged by war and deprived of Christian pilgrims.

In 2025, two books are noteworthy as being new to our publications: another book in the "*Lives of the Saints*" series on Anne de Guigné: "*La gioia che dura*" ["*The Joy that Lasts*"], and the book "*Problemi dell'apostolato moderno e Catechismo delle verità opposte agli errori del nostro tempo*" ["*The Problems of the Modern Apostolate and the Truth opposed to the Errors of our Times*"] by Bishop Castro Mayer. Both can be purchased on our e-commerce website.

• Various

The priests of the Institute celebrated Holy Mass in a retirement home for the elderly in Piedmont several times during 2024 and 2025.

On September 4, 2024, Father Coradello blessed the stables, livestock, hay, dairy, butcher shop, and tractors of a farm in Trentino, and on October 5, 2024, he blessed the Viotti Veterinary Clinic in Vercelli; on October 22, 2024, he blessed the Bazzoli workshop in Lavis (TN). On September 30, 2024, Father Giugni blessed the branch of a newly renovated bank in Rovereto. As usual, the buildings of the Meat-Doria, Sidat, and other companies were blessed during Easter in Trofarello (Turin), and the Nuova Vermst company in Moncalieri.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

• Baptisms

02/10/24, Antoine Gilet in Paris (with the adult rite).
03/02/24, Michael Vev in Osijek (Croatia).
03/30/24, Pierre and Louis Sandeville in Serre-Nerpol (F) and Lina, Alissa, and Sofia Ginolin, in Servion (CH).
03/31/24, Gemma Kalmar in Estaimpuis (B).
04/01/24, Noa Munoz Velasquez in Wetteren (B).
04/01/24, Sarah Moll in Paris (with the adult rite).
04/06/24, Philomène Herrouin in Saint Maurice in Brittany (F).
04/13/24, Antoine Bosson and Thomas Esclatine in Lyon (F).
04/13/24, Baptiste Houareau, Noa Marlière, and Sylvester Rep in Dendermonde(B).
04/20/24, Michele Romerio in Milan, and Côme Gastin in Lyon.
04/21/24, Petra Bajri in Zagreb (Croatia)
05/05/24, Sebastiano Maria Vioglio in Verrua Savoia (Turin).
05/05/24, Filippo Giuseppe Girlanda in Locara (Verona).
05/18/24, Francesco Girolamo Maria Salza in Milan.
05/19/24, Paul Lesueur in Estaimpuis (B).
05/25/24, Alphonse Dias and Jeanne Horellou in Paris.
06/05/24, Gabriel Bousige in Rochefort Samson (France).
06/08//24, Isotta Camilla Giugni in Sanfrè (CN).
06/082024, Augustin Degusseau in Serre Nerpol (F).
06/15/24, Paul Bardon in Serre-Nerpol (F).
06/22/24, Chiara Mastrodomenico a Verrua (TO).
06/22/24, Nathanaël Gicquel in Lyon.
06/22//24, Armel Douchez in Tourcoing (F).
06/23/24, Ignatius Raimundus Thaddaeus Koncz in Bucsuta (Hungary).
06/27/24, Iisak Pöykkö in Finland.
06/29/24, Giacomo Paolo Maria Molara in Rimini.
06/30/24, Jeanne Touzard in Bièvres (diocese of Evry) (F).
07/05/24, Marion Ker Bidi in Paris.
07/6/24, Henri Robert Wain to Cressier (Swiss).
07/13/24, Marie-Louise Talbot in Nogentle-Bernard (Sarthe) (F).

07/22/24, Jeanne Marcus in Paris.
08/02/24, Alfonso Maria del Rosario Babithere-Albornoz-Castro in Cluj (Romania).
08/03/24, Jehanne Laiguedé in Serre-Nerpol (F).
08/16/24, Maryline Chomton at Le Mans (with the adult rite) (F).
08/24/24, Vittoria Chiavenato in Pescantina (VR).
08/29/24, Ange Chiocanini in Serre-Nerpol (F).
09/26/24, Sofia Maria Quagliarella in Milan; she was baptized by her father urgently and received the sacraments on April 5, 2025 in Pescantina (VR).
09/26/24, Gabriel Gandolfi in Estaimpuis (B).
10/02/24, Domitille Leost in Toulouse (F).
10/03/24, Marie Manetta in Serre-Nerpol(F).
10/05/24, Clément Mosser and Jovan Hofstetter in Paris (with the adult rite).
10/12/24, Edwin Lindholm in Finland.
10/13/24, Yves Bellebouche in Vallauris.
10/22/24, Mira Sinecoindin in Paris (with the rite of adults).
10/22/24, Hélène Buliard in Paris.
10/26/24, Ettore Maria Molinari in Satriano di Lucania.
11/09/24, Édouard Pipart in Nîmes (F).
11/09/24, Georges Desolle near Caen (F).
11/11/24, Sophia Boukrab (with the rite of adults) (F).
11/12/24, Vittoria Ester Verdiana Ceccanti in Gualdo Tadino (PG).
11/16/24, Léon Gastin in Luynes (Aix-en-Provence).
11/17/24, Ilona Simó in Budakeszi (Hungary).
12/01/24, Joy Wawrykowycz in Dendermonde (B).
12/07/24, Emeka Buxo in Épagny (F).
12/08/24, Alma Dochy in Estaimpuis (B).
12/21/24, Raphaël Voisin in Serre-Nerpol (F).
12/22/24, Caio Davide Partel in Rovereto (TN).
12/22/24, Bernadette Gillis in Estaimthen (B).
01/01/25, Antoine Sandeville in Serre Nerpol (F).
01/04/25, Baptiste Cozic in Paris.
01/11/25, Amaryllis Poireau in Serre Nerpol (F); and Adrien Connier at Versailles (F).
01/17/25, Elisabeth Labarre in Paris.
02/1/25, Jehanne Lasso in Lyon; and Nathanaël Bouafia-Rachi in Paris (F).
02/3/25, Isaia Rafael Aleccia in Verrua Savoy (TO).
02/16/25, Paolo Al Zuhouri in Albarea (FE) (with the rite of adults).
03/06/25, Clotilde Chiocanini in Serre Nerpol (F).
03/22/25, Blanche Besdinier in Nyons (F).
03/29/25, Stella Roussel in Serre-Nerpol (F).
03/30/25, Gabriel and Daphné Formarier in Lyon.
03/30/25, Isaure Masurel in Estaimpuis (B).
03/30/25, Briseïs Maria Lefebvre in Estaimpuis (B).
04/05/25, Justin Haagsman to Dendermonde (B).
04/05/25, Namrata Ramah in Dendermonde (B).
04/12/25, Éléonore Le Roux in Paris.
04/12/25, Honorine Fenel in Versailles (F).
4/20/25, Giuseppe Augusto Scortecci at the chapel of the Fattoria il Colombaio (AR).
04/20/25, Paul Traullé in Estaimpuis (B) and Julien Miquel at Servion (CH).
04/26/25, Louis François Claude Zamora in Épagny (F).
04/27/25, Latthawan Marguerite Marie Seepadcha a Servion (with the rite of adults).
05/02/25, Milla Harkonen, Jasmine et Saima Boulberhane in Finland.
05/03/25, Michel Dimitri Georges Robert Steier and Élodie Marie Perez in Nîmes (F).
05/06/25, Marie Cirion in Nogent-le-Roi (diocese of Chartres) (F).
05/08/25, Noah Delplanque in Estaimpuis (B).
05/08/25, Olympe Lecerf in Dendermonde (B).
05/10/25, Sophie Chaussin in Paris.
05/12/25, Damian Ronconi in Rovereto (TN).
05/17/24, Lucas Naman in Paris (with the rite of adults).
05/25/24, Marko Juraj Bešli in Zagreb(Croatia) received a complement of ceremonies; he had been baptized on April 28.
05/29/24, Sylvie Roussel and Cinzia La Brosse in Le Mans (with the rite of adults) (F).
05/30/24, Marc Charra in Vallauris (F).
05/31/24, Viola Onyekweri Marchesini in Pescantina (VR).
05/312025, Marie Frédérique Wauquier and Jules François Yves Maurice Louis Ruffin and two additional ceremonies in Nîmes (F).
05/31/24, Raphael Kaci in Paris (with the adult rite).
06/01/24, Joseph Benjamin Alexandre Boris Ollier in Nîmes (F).
06/07/24, Louis Carette in Paris (with the adult rite).
06/19/24, Ludovica Ambrosi in Verrua Savoia (TO).
06/21/24, Olimpia Clara Lidia LuigiaVesta Candoli in Rimini.
06/25/24, François, Nicolas Raulet in Épagny (F).
20 additional baptisms in Paris.

• Marriages

First Communions in Milan 2024 and in Verrua Savoia in 2025

03/01/24, Éloi Fauvergue and Charlotte Bertrand in the diocese of Nanterre (F).
05/04/24, Andrea Candela and Marzia Peretto in Verrua Savoia (TO).
06/08/24, François Zamora and Caroline Presles in Chasselay (F).
06/09/24, Régis Prevost and Oriane Abrazian in Chasselay (F).
05/01/24, Morgan Honstettre and Sarah Moll in Paris.
06/15/24, Hugo Chaussin and Claire Braikeh in the diocese of Nanterre (F).
06/22/24, Riccardo Pilotti and Francesca Bichiri at Tenuta Castelrosso in Costigliole (CN).
07/06/24, Grigoriy Zhaivoronok and Zrinka Maras in Split (Croatia).
08/16/24, Philippe Cailliez and Maryline Chomton in Le Mans (F).
08/24/24, Louis Jutard and Charlotte Muller in the diocese of Nanterre (F).
09/28/24, François Pierrard and Bianca Faulisi in Malines-Mechelen (B).
10/05/24, Mickaeël Bardon and Lucile Bassinet in Flayosc (F).
10/26/24, Marie Formarier and Thierry Lasso at the chapel in Lyon (F).
11/11/24, Kevin Telga and Sophia Boukrab in Paris.
11/15/24, Laurent Salles and Raffaela Scaperrotta in Le Mans (F).
11/22/24, Yves Bourguignon and Marie Cristobal in Paris.
01/20/24, Yoann Zamora and Éloïse Duhamel in Serre-Nerpol (F).
01/23/24, Luca Marsan and Elena Losasso in Pignola (PZ).
05/03/24, Michel Dimitri Georges Robert Steier and Élodie Marie in Nîmes (F).

• Anniversaries

On May 4, 2025, Mr. and Mrs. Koncz, parents of Sister Teresa and the seminarian Levente Koncz, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary at the Budakeszi chapel.

On September 28, 2024, the Marcantes also celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Verrua Savoia with a Mass celebrated by Father Ugolino. On October 20, 2024, it was the turn of the Condoleos, while the Chasseurs of Aosta also celebrated 50 years of marriage.

On June 9, 2024, Father Carandino and on June 8, 2025, Father Fraschetti celebrated Mass for the fallen in the former parish church of Paderno (FC), now owned by the National Association of Families of the Fallen and Missing of the RSI. On March 20, 2024, Father Giugni celebrated Mass for the fallen of the RSI at the Bergamo cemetery. At the Monumental Cemetery in Turin, the fallen are remembered every year, in November and April, with a brief ceremony.

On June 4, 2025, Luca Zanotti and Elisabetta Zilio celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary surrounded by their four children; Father Piero celebrated the Mass at their home in the municipality of Rosignano Monferrato. On June 15, 2025, Carlo and Maria Consolata Sardi celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in Turin with a Mass celebrated by Father Coradello.

In June, two priests traveled from Italy and France to Detroit, Michigan to represent the IMBC at the 50th anniversary of the priesthood of our longtime friend, Bishop Donald Sanborn. What a wonderful anniversary, ad multos annos! This visit was also an opportunity to visit their seminary, now relocated to Pennsylvania.

Father Le Gal and Father Coradello during their visit to the USA for Bishop Sanborn's jubilee

We would like to draw our readers' attention to two anniversaries that fall this year, 2025, concerning those priests who were completely faithful to the line of the Pontificate of Saint Pius X.

On March 12, 1925, in fact, Jesuit Father Guido Mattiussi died in Gorizia, someone about whom we had the opportunity to speak in the special issue of *Sodalitium* dedicated to Monsignor Benigni (n. 74, pp. 31 ff.). The "Don Paolo de Töth" Study Center, edited by our Father Piero Fraschetti, paid homage to Fr. Mattiussi's memory on the centenary of his death by publishing a commemoration written at the time by his inseparable friend, a Friulian like him, Father Paolo de Töth in "*Fede e Ragione*". The article in question can be found on the Center's website at the following address: P. Guido Mattiussi. Cento anni dalla morte– Centro Studi Paolo De Töth

We are indebted to the magazine *Lectures Françaises* (no. 815, March 2025), for the commemoration given for Abbé Emmanuel Barbier, who died in Paris on March 22, 1925, only ten days after Father Mattiussi, with an extensive "Dossier" in his honor (pp. 48-68). We congratulate the French magazine founded in its time by Henri Coston, and we also thank our confreres for having pointed out (on p. 59) the aforementioned special issue of *Sodalitium* (no. 73 in the French edition). Our readers, however, are already aware of our reservations regarding the question of the Ralliement (n. 72, Italian edition) and that of Paul Drach's "Christian Kabbalism" (n. 70-71, Italian edition). Let us remember in prayer these valiant defenders of the integrity of the Faith and implacable enemies of modernism and modern errors.

• Confirmations

09/28/24, in Servion (Lausanne) (about twenty confirmandi).
09/09/24, in Paris (45 confirmandi).
10/19/24, in Verrua Savoia (21 confirmandi).
10/10/24, in Rovereto (23 confirmandi).
05/18/24, in Serre-Nerpol (56 confirmandi).
06/15/24, in Nîmes (38 confirmandi).

• First Communions

03/31/24, Pierre and Louis Sandeville in Serre-Nerpol (F).
04/07/24, Martin Mezieres in Serre-Nerpol (F).
10/04/24, István Koncz in Bucharest (Hungary).
05/19/24, Adrien and Angèle Coignard in Épagny (F).
05/26/24, Louise Ramis in Serre-Nerpol (F).
6/1/24, Samantha and Elia Gerola, Gabriele Trentini, Ettore Fattor, Tiberio Prandi and Antonio Pacenza in Rovereto.
06/05/24, Gabriel Rousselot in Épagny (F).
06/02/24, Krys Telga, Roméo Burelli, Aurélien Niakate, Anne-Marie Foulquier, and Joseph Baroud in Paris.
06/09/24, Dario Bragagnolo in Turin.
06/22/24, Chiara Mastrodomenico in Verrua.
08/15/24, Cyriaque de Rouville in Raveau.
11/01/24, Louna Lallevée in Raveau.
12/08/24, Louis Horellou in Paris.
06/22/24, Éléonore Le Roux and Honorine Fenel in Paris.
06/08/24, Teodora Consonni, Giovanna Chiarello, and Gioele Varano in Milan.
10/07/24, Giuseppe Mazzasette, at the Tenuta Castelverde chapel (TR).

10/13/24, Yves Bellebouche in Vallauris (F).

• Deceased

-2024

On March 12, 2024, **Alberto Pittaffi**, 67, passed away in Rome. He had received the sacraments from our priests for years and had his funeral celebrated in our Roman oratory. On April 2, 2024, **Mrs. Palmyre Biello** was called back to God, equipped with the sacraments. We celebrated her funeral in the church of Montsoult, in the Paris region, and she was buried in the Pantin cemetery. On April 24, 2024, **Oronzo Sabatelli** died in Fasano (BR): he had received the sacraments from Father Carandino, who celebrated the funeral. On April 25, 2024, **Juko Prtenja**, 89, passed away in Gothenburg, Sweden. He was originally from Croatia, where he had valiantly defended the Church and his country in his youth. The funeral was celebrated on May 7 by Father Trauner. On April 29, 2024, **Mrs. Monique Hogrel**, benefactor of the Paris chapel for the acquisition of our Oratory in 2011, passed away. She was a faithful member of the chapel for many years, until her transfer to Brittany. We recommend her to your prayers. On May 4, 2024, **Raimondo Tofalo** passed away in Rome; Father Piero then celebrated his funeral. He was buried on May 7 at the Flaminio cemetery in Prima Porta (Rome). On May 11, 2024, **Jean-François Mangeot** was called back to God at the age of 53, in Créteil, near Paris, after a long illness. With his wife, he had recently returned to Mass by the grace of God. A faithful member of the Paris chapel, he had wanted to make a general confession and had received the sacraments regularly since then. He was buried in the Itteville cemetery. On May 29, **Sandro Rosso** of Biella, after a painful illness, died at the age of only 58, having received all the sacraments. He attended Mass in Verrua.

On June 20, 2024, **Thérèse Jorland**, née Laÿs, a faithful historian of the Lyon chapel, passed away at the age of 78. She had been following us for many years. Her funeral was held on June 25 at the Maison Saint-Joseph, and she was buried in Vinay. Father Murro remembers her as follows: “She always lived in Lyon, and she had given a considerable hand to the development of our chapel, both when it was in Cours Suchet and later on Rue Pareille. She did her utmost to resolve many practical problems. She was also of great help in organizing the pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de l'Osier from its beginning in 2000: discreetly she took care, as long as her strength allowed, of all the administrative work, less visible but essential for its smooth running. After leaving Lyon to care for and help her son and his family, she continued to help with the Lyon apostolate, compiling the monthly Mass calendar. Her absence is still felt, both by her family and by friends.” On July 10, 2024, **Giovanni Giuseppe Raimondi**, Walter's father, passed away in Turin at the age of 86, with the holy sacraments . On July 16, 2024, **Germaine Veldeman**, who had been the housekeeper for many years of Father Stuyver, the Bishop's uncle, passed away. On August 15, 2024, **Anna Troubleyn**, wife of Robert De Bock, passed away in Belgium. On July 16, 2024, **Alessandra Viola**, who had received all the sacraments from Father Giugni and Father Langlet, died of a sudden illness in Gussago (BS). On July 18, 2024, **Fulvia Ferrari Coradello**, mother of Giuseppe and grandmother of Father Coradello, who had administered the sacraments to her shortly before, passed away in Mattarello (TN).

On August 13, 2024, **Filomena Ghinassi Rubechi**, mother of Giuseppe Rubechi, passed away at the hospital in Arezzo, with the holy sacraments. Father Ricossa celebrated her funeral at San Polo and her burial at Sant'Anastasio. On August 28, 2024, also in the Arezzo area, in Sansepolcro, **Anna Antonia Castiglioni**, mother of Maurizio Canosci, passed away. Father Ricossa had administered the sacraments to her on the 13th. On September 4, 2024, **Elisa Pignatti**, grandmother of Simone Reggiani, passed away. Father Coradello had administered the sacraments to her. On September 12, 2024, **Isabelle Pasquier**, widow of Collet, passed away. With her husband,

Aldo Velentini † September 13, 2025

she organized the Mass centers in Lausanne and Vevey in the 1970s. The Collets welcomed the Ricos brothers into their home when they were students at the Pareto Institute in Lausanne in the 1970s, and she was still a reader and supporter of *Sodalitium*. On September 13, 2024, after a long illness that he accepted as a Christian, during which he regularly received the sacraments from Father Giugni and Father Coradello, **Aldo Valentini**, a long-time faithful of the Institute, died in Trento; he had received all the sacraments. The funeral was celebrated on September 16 at the Trento cemetery by Father Giugni. On September 19, 2024, **Ermanno Monini**, the father of one of our Roman faithful, passed away in Rome; the funeral was celebrated at our Oratory and the burial was held at the Laurentino cemetery in the capital. At the age of 88, **Maria Tomatis**, widow of Sartirano, passed away in Turin on September 20, 2024. Her funeral was held on September 24, 2024, in Turin, celebrated by Father Ricossa at the Oratory of the Sacred Heart; Father Giugni conducted the burial in Dogliani (CN). A faithful from the very beginning, initially in the Church of the Holy Trinity at the Mass celebrated by Monsignor Vaudagnotti, then on Via Verdi, she followed us together with her husband when we left the Fraternity, helping us when we were without everything. She lived near the oratory on Via Thesauro in Turin, and in her later years regularly received the sacraments at home from our priests. **Lucia Calderoni in Rizzoli** passed away on September 25, 2024. With her husband, for a time, she hosted the celebration of Holy Mass in Bologna.

On November 28, 2024, **Yasmany Alberto Oliva**, a Venetian faithful of Cuban origins and a friend of the priests of the Institute, passed away in Padua. He was 36 years old and leaves behind three children and a young wife, to whom we extend our deepest condolences and prayers. On November 24, 2024, **Dr. René Verbraeken**, the widower of Mrs. Godelieve Pelemans, passed away in Hamme (Belgium) at the age of 99, receiving the holy sacraments. A faithful believer from the very beginning, he was editor of the magazine *Voor Outer en Heerd* and a benefactor of the priests engaged in the fight for the Faith in Flanders. His funeral was celebrated in Dendermonde. On December 2, 2024, in Csabdi (Hungary), **Szilicsány Józsefné Sipos Erzsébet**, aged 90, grandmother of one of our faithful, passed away; the funeral took place on December 13. On December 9, 2024, **Mr. Serge Lacôte** passed away after a long illness. A mathematics professor with a passion for truth, he became immersed in the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, and from there, he became acquainted with Bishop Guérard des Lauriers and the Cassiciacum thesis. He therefore not only remained faithful to attending the Mass non una cum, but also sought to share the saving truth with his acquaintances: his family, his wife, and his acquaintances also embraced the sacraments. Today, the Institute occasionally celebrates Mass in the Creuse department of France, thanks to the apostolate that Mr. Lacôte carried out in the region. He spent his last days at the home of his daughter, who lives near Langon. Thanks to the kind hospitality of Father Belmont, Father Murro was able to celebrate the funeral in his chapel in Saint-Maixant, and the burial was held in Creuse.

-2025

On January 2, 2025, **Johann Trauner**, Father Arnold's father, passed away in Austria. The

Institute gathers in prayer around our confrere. On January 5, 2025, **Giovanni Gallo**, who was able to receive the holy sacraments thanks to the Bichiri family, passed away in the Candiolo hospital (Turin). On January 20, 2025, **Ugo Goldoni**, 86, died in a nursing home in Riccione. A longtime friend, who had received Holy Communion at the beginning of January. On January 21, 2025, **Mrs. Antonietta Raffa**, widow of Salza, passed away. A month earlier, she had received the sacraments from Father Carandino in her home in Ariano Irpino (AV). We were saddened to learn of the death of **Luc Paczuski** on January 13, 1925, at the age of just 39, following a long and terrible illness. Of Polish origin but raised in the United States, he had returned to study in Poland, where he also married and resided. He had spent two long periods in Paris, where we met him. A brilliant intelligent man, he walked toward the truth to the point of understanding the vacancy of the See and the studies of Bishop Guérard. Since then, he had put his academic talents to the service of defending the faith in the Polish language, with the help of his wife (creating, in particular, a website to spread awareness of Monsignor Benigni's *Sodalitium Pianum*, to whom we are very connected). He died a holy death after once again receiving the last sacraments, from the hands of our Polish confrere, Father Trytek.

Olga Kovar's funeral was celebrated on February 1, 2025, at the Certosa di Bologna. On February 5, 2025, **Marie France Serre**, a longtime member of the IMBC in Paris, was called back to God, equipped with the last sacraments. Born a Protestant in 1953, she had returned to the path of faith and had frequented our chapel in Paris since 2010. Gifted with an extraordinary gift for pedagogy and a solid common sense, she managed to spread the faith with simple and effective means, making the truths within the reach of the most ignorant souls. She was buried, according to her last wishes, in the Serre-Nerpol cemetery, near the Sisters of Christ the King. The Paris chapel wanted to place a memorial plaque on her tomb so that even in Isère the good she did for our Parisian faithful would not be forgotten. On February 11, 2025, **Rina Perron**, widow of Carmagnola, passed away after receiving absolution and extreme unction at the Mauriziano Hospital in Turin. The following day, her neighbor, **Rosamaria Rabotti**, widow of Ricossa, died at the Mauriziano, whom we remember separately. On February 19, 2025, **Christian Georges Hingot** (born April 10, 1935) died in Renaix, receiving the holy sacraments. The funeral was celebrated in a small church in Frasnes-les-Anvaing. On February 22, 2025, **Robert De Bock**, widower of Anna Troubleyn, passed away. Fervent believers, they rendered many services at the chapel in Dendermonde. With great sadness, it was not possible to celebrate their funerals due to the family's opposition. On March 4, 2025, in Dendermonde, Veerle Stuyver, the Bishop's sister, passed away at the age of 67, and received the holy sacraments. Her funeral services were held at the chapel in Dendermonde.

On March 15, 2025, **Federico Augusto**, aged 88, died in Milan. A faithful member of the Institute for many years (since the days of Via Vivarini), he attended Holy Mass at the Oratory of St. Ambrose. When illness struck him, he regularly received the sacraments at home from Father Giugni. Unfortunately, his funeral was held in the parish.

On March 19, 2025, **Clara Guidotto in Corradini**, died in Rovereto. She had received all the sacraments from Father Giugni and from Father Coradello. Father Giugni celebrated her funeral on March 21 in Lizzana di Rovereto. On March 22, 2025, Father Langlet celebrated the funeral of **Franco Dolcini** in Meldola (Forlì-Cesena).

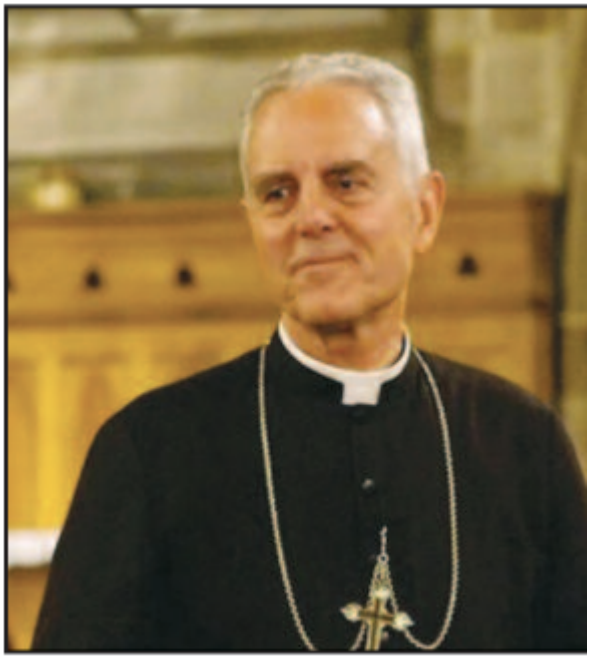
On March 26, 2025, after a long illness, **Maurizio Boccacci**, of Albano Laziale, passed away at the age of 64. He had done the Spiritual Exercises with us in Albano, and since then we had remained on friendly terms. On April 12, 2025, **Teresa Figliano**, widow of Morabito, died in Luserna San Giovanni (Turin). She had worked for many years for Mrs. Ricossa and had therefore also helped us in Verrua; Father Francesco gave

her last rites. On April 17, 2025, **Cesarino Bartolini** died in Castenaso (BO). Father Fraschetti had brought him religious comfort on April 8, thanks to his niece Carlotta. On May 3, 2025, **Agostina Pandini**, of Milan, passed away. Father Coradello had been able to assure to her the last sacraments. On May 10, 2025, **Silvano Paniati** passed away at Molinette in Turin. Thanks to the help of a colleague (he worked in insurance), he was able to obtain sacramental confession, receive absolution from censures, and receive last rites on the 8th. On June 3, 2025, in Aramengo, equipped with all the sacraments and after a long illness, Engineer **Alberto Fontan** passed away at the age of 73. The funeral was celebrated by Father Fraschetti at the chapel of our Institute in Verrua on June 6th, with burial in Aramengo (AT). On June 18, 2025, **Dania Spinelli Buono** passed away in Florence, after receiving last rites; condolences to the Fieni family. We recommend to your prayers the souls of **Rosa Bruna**, widow of Gizzi of Ceccano (91 years old), and **Mrs. Maria Assunta Selvaggio**, widow of Zefilippo of Modugno (aged 101 and 6 months).

A memory (different from that of *La Tradizione Cattolica*)

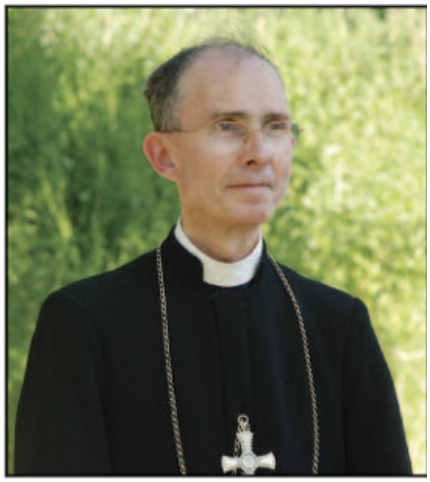
On October 8, 2024, Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais died, and on January 29, 2025, Bishop Richard Williamson followed him; both had been consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro Mayer on June 30, 1988, a decision we disapproved of because it was carried out in communion (una cum) with John Paul II. Many have written about them, especially (but not only) in the small world of "Tradition": both those who knew the two bishops well and those who never knew them, or barely knew them. Of all the contributions, the most beautiful and accurate memory was, in my opinion, that of Bishop Sanborn, who had shared his seminary studies with both of them.

I too would like to share with readers some of my memories of two people who, for different reasons, played an important role in my life, but



Mons Richard Williamson

rather as if I were speaking aloud to myself. Attending Écône since 1974, I certainly saw and encountered them, but from afar (except for Williamson, with whom I attended a session of the Spiritual Exercises in Italian); even when I applied to enter the seminary the following academic year, the seminary director I spoke with was still Canon Berthod. The beginning of my first year at the seminary was stormy: upon my return in September 1977, after a retreat preached by Father Guérard des Lauriers, many "liberal" seminarians and the faculty—including the director—had left the seminary, while Father Guérard, also a professor, had been dismissed. Archbishop Lefebvre thus had to hastily find teachers chosen from among old fathers or, contrarily, young priests who had not yet taught (at least in Écône). Among the latter, **Tissier de Mallerais**, professor of moral theology who soon became director of the seminary, and **Richard Williamson**, professor of dogmatics, stood out. Of all the professors of those years, they were certainly the best: Tissier simply faithful to the manual he followed (Prümmer), Williamson, on the other hand, possessed a rich and original personality, with which he commented on the articles of St. Thomas one by one. A brilliant commentator on Thomistic philosophy and theology, Father Williamson, on the other



Mons. Bernard Tissier de Mallerais

hand, was lacking in ecclesiology, and combined his "metaphysical" side with multifaceted literary, artistic, and political interests... above all, his penchant for "apparitionism" was striking. The two men clashed over the question of the permissibility of assisting at the New Mass, a dispute that arose among Italian seminarians led by a professor, Father Cantoni, brother of the founder of *Alleanza Cattolica*, and a staunch supporter of the permissibility of such assistance. Father Williamson sided with those who denied the permissibility of such assistance, while the director of the seminary, Father Tissier, defended it. The fact is that Father Tissier's defining personality trait was an unconditional loyalty to Archbishop Lefebvre, and Archbishop Lefebvre, up until that point, had defended the permissibility of assisting at the New Mass, against the opinions of Father Guérard and Father Vinson. Father Williamson, on the other hand, was a much less unconditional disciple of Archbishop Lefebvre, and supported all the "right-wing" "branches" on one condition: that the branches remain faithful to the Society. Many led by Father Williamson (myself included) were thus sent into the fray by the director, at their own expense, and then perhaps abandoned when the situation became irreparable. To regain the trust of his superiors, Father Williamson was transferred from Écône and sent to the United States to destroy that district which was intransigent in its liturgy and suspected of sedevacantism: a mission accomplished admirably, with the removal of the "nine bad priests".

In contrast, Father Tissier, although initially favorable to the possibility of attending the New Mass, and later to an agreement with John Paul II (he was among the Society's experts in the negotiations), and less than enthusiastic about the prospect of episcopal consecrations without a Roman Mandate, he always ended up following Archbishop Lefebvre, abandoning his own personal inclinations. When the two were chosen as Bishops in 1988 (they were the two "elders", accompanied by two "youngsters" of less import), it was thought that one represented the "right" wing (Williamson) and the other the "left" wing of the Society. Subsequent events, however, did not confirm this first impression. It's true that Archbishop Williamson was removed from the Society for opposing a phantom neo-Society that was too soft on the "Romans" (a detestable expression he used to refer to the modernists, who were actually anti-Roman), but what was the so-called "Resistance" inaugurated by Williamson? On the one hand, he effectively continued the role he already played in the Society: that is, holding back all those people who were discontented with Archbishop Lefebvre's positions (recognizing the legitimacy of the occupants of the Sees, habitually disobeying them, and resulting in contempt for the Papacy: in a word, as they say in the United States, the "recognize and resist" people). Worse still, Bishop Williamson sabotaged his own movement by declaring that it was pointless to organize, to establish a seminary, and so on, but that it was more appropriate to proceed in a scattered fashion, discouraging vocations or ordaining priests without even the proper preparation. Furthermore, based on alleged miracles, the man who in the seminary in the 1970s denied the legitimacy of assisting at the New Mass now admitted its possibility and defended the validity of the new rites while inconsistently practicing numerous, hasty, and unliturgical conditional reordinations. Paradoxically, given past events, our Institute had

cordial, if sporadic, contacts not with Bishop Williamson, but with Bishop Tissier de Mallerais, discreetly sidelined by his superiors, who was always a keen reader (and somewhat of a sympathizer) of *Sodalitium*: who would have ever thought it?

Now that they are both in Eternity, I think of them fondly: both Father Tissier (who also expelled me from the seminary—but the plot had been woven elsewhere) and Father Williamson (who was my director, confessor, and assistant priest at my priestly ordination); I remember both of them in my prayers with gratitude for the good I received. And if my memory turns with nostalgia to the years of our youth, their memory makes me think even more of that eternity that still awaits us who are still here below, and which is drawing near. Requiescant in pace.

Father Francesco Ricossa

P.S. On the 16th of May, 2025 a dear old friend of the seminary passed away: Father **Edgardo Albamonte**. He was still part of the Society, but did not celebrate *una cum*. May God reward his faith, and forgive his lack of courage.

In Remembrance of my mother (but not as such)

In the long and sad list of the faithful departed that we publish in every issue of *Sodalitium* (sad but also consoling, as almost all are nourished by the sacraments) this time there is also the name of my mother, **Rosamaria Rabotti**. Born in Turin on September 29, 1932, she became a "Daughter of Mary" of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart on February 2, 1951, and married my father, Sergio Ricossa, in the parish (Reggio Emilia) on September 12, 1957. She received extreme unction on February 5, Holy Viaticum on the 9th, and presented herself to God on the 13th of the month. Her requiem Mass was celebrated in Turin at our Chapel on the 17th, and she was buried in the family grave at Castelnovo ne' Monti (Reggio Emilia). I am not remembering her here as my mother (my thoughts are too personal), but as one who was so beneficial to our Institute, especially in those first decades of our existence: "*we cannot forget all that she has done for us*" - wrote Father Giuseppe - "*and we remain united in prayer, as we await seeing her again in Heaven.*" As I did for another person who had helped us, I hope it can be useful even in this case to publish the words I spoke in the homily at her funeral.

"On this past February 2, for the last time, my mother attended Holy mass in this Church, on the feast of Candlemass, while the ancient Simeon sung his Nunc dimittis:

Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word I go in peace, because my eyes have seen thy salvation* which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples…*

Today, for the last time, her body, which was a temple of the Holy Ghost, entered into this Church, which is, in itself, a prayer of intercession for her before God, because it was her faith and her love of God that urged her to build for the Lord, and for the celebration of the Holy Mass, this His House.

Years ago, when thinking about the day of her death, she had given me some objects that she wanted to take with her on her journey to eternal life: the rosary, which she recited every day, a crucifix, the Daughter of Mary medal bearing on one side the image of the Immaculate Conception and the inscription: ""Marie a été conçue sans péché" and on the other the Sacred Heart with this invocation: Cor meum jugatur vobis: my heart is united to You…and yours. And then there was the little image

recalling the day in which she became a Daughter of Mary, precisely February 2 - but in the year 1951 - in Valsalice, when she was only 18 years old, with the motto she chose for the occasion: In your will is our peace. Thy will be done, Lord, you who obeyed your Father unto death, even death on the cross.

She wanted to remain faithful to the faith she received from her family and from her religious sisters until her death: I don't want to change the religion that I was taught as a child, she often repeated to me. From her parents, she inherited the courage of her convictions, her extraordinary abilities, her great generosity. The wedding ring she wore on her finger reminded her of how on September 12, 1957, in the church of Baiso, in the Reggio Emilia Apennines her uncle, Monsignor Rabotti, blessed her marriage to our father, founding a united family. Despite their exposure to the world of business, culture and politics, our parents were never flattered by the worldly spirit, the vain illusions of this world, and the only honor our mother boasted of was this: to obtain from Our Lady of Loreto the return of our father to religious practice, also here, every Sunday in this Church. It comforts me now to think of them together. She was a daughter, a wife, and a mother; we children are proud of her, but our Institute as well - especially in its early days - had her for a mother for a little while, because she cared for us like one. In this last week of her suffering, reciting every day the recommendation of her soul, I was struck by these words that I make my own:

"Look, O Lord, upon this creature of yours, who was not created by foreign gods, but by you alone, the living and true God; for there is no other God besides you…Make her soul glad in your sight, and do not remember her sins…For though she sinned, she did not deny the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but believed; she had within her a zeal for God and faithfully worshiped the God who made all things. Do not remember, Lord, the sins and ignorance of her youth, but in your great mercy remember her in the splendor of your glory. Let the heavens open to her, and let the angels rejoice with her. Lord, receive your servant into your kingdom." She loved to repeat these words from the Dies irae: qui Mariam absolvisti, et latronem exaudisti, mihi quoque spem dedisti: confidava, confidiamo nella misericordia di Dio.

She always told me in these last days: every evening, knowing that I might never wake up again, I commend myself to my Guardian Angel so that he will not abandon me, but accompany me until the judgment of God. Behold, Mom, Luca and I entrust you to the Virgin Mary, whose daughter you are, and to Jesus Christ Crucified: you are in good hands, and we too say as you do and with you: our peace is in Your will.

Father Francesco Ricossa

NOTICE TO OUR READERS

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Saturday October 11, 2025 - Hotel "La Cariera" in Vignola (MO), via Sega 2

XXIII Edition of the Day for the Social Kingship of Christ
with a seminar of study given by Father Francesco Ricossa,
Director of the magazine, Sodalitium, on the theme:

"TIBI DABO CLAVES. The Successor of Peter in the Church and in Christianity"

Program

- 10:00 am: arrival of the participants and the opening of the book and magazine exhibition.
- 10:45 am: seminar begins.
- 11:00 am: first lesson: **"The Pope in Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium"**.
- 12:30 pm: luncheon
- 2:30 pm: second lesson: **"The Pope and Christianity: friends and enemies"**.
- 4:00 pm: **"The first modernist turning point, during and after the Second Vatican Council"**.
- 5:30 pm: conclusion of the seminar

Luncheon: The fee is €30.00 per person. Reservations are required by Thursday, October 9, 2025, subject to availability (please pay a €10.00 deposit, which will be forfeited in the event of cancellation). Those who will not be attending for lunch are still invited to register their attendance so that sufficient seating can be arranged in the conference room.
Distribution of informational materials is not permitted without the authorization of the organizer.

How to reach to the Hotel La Cariera in Vignola (MO)
-For those arriving from Florence/Padua/Bologna by motorway: exit at the Valsamoggia toll booth, then take the Via Bazzanese/SP569 towards Vignola (from the toll booth: 12.9 km).
- For those arriving by motorway from Piacenza/Milan/Verona: exit at the Modena-Sud toll booth, then take the provincial road SP623 towards Spilamberto – Vignola (from the toll booth: 9.8 km).

Organizers of the Day: the magazine "Sodalitium"
and the "Giuseppe Federici" Study Center.
For information and registration: Tel. 0541.758961 – info.casasanpiox@gmail.com

HOLY MASSES

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ITALY - Verrua Savoia (TO): Mother House

-**Istituto Mater Boni Consilii**, *Church of SS. Peter and Paul*, Loc. Carbignano, 36. On weekdays, Holy Mass at 7:30 a.m.; Sundays, Holy Mass at 6:00 p.m. Eucharistic Benediction every Friday at 9:00 p.m. Tel.:0161.839335; email: *info@sodalitium.it*

San Martino dei Mulini (RN): PIUS X HOUSE - *Father Ugo Carandino*, via Sarzana 86, ZIP 47822. Tel.:0541.758.961; email: *info.casasanpiox@gmail.com*

BELGIUM - Dendermonde: *Bishop Geert Stuyver*, Kapel O.L.V. van Goede Raad, Koning Albertstraat 146, 9200 Sint-Gillis, Dendermonde. Mass every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Tel. and Fax: (+32) (0) 52/380778.

FRANCE - Raveau: 350 route de Mouchy, 58400 Raveau. For information: Tel.: (+33) 03.86.70.11.14; email: *info@sodalitium.eu*

OTHER MESSE IN ITALY

Ferrara: Chiesa S. Luigi, Via Pacchenia 47, Albarea. Every Sunday at 5:30 p.m.

Imperia (province): One Sunday per month. Program distributed by email.

Gravellona Lomellina (PV): *Father Marco Pizzocchi*, Via Verdi 28. Mass every Sunday. For information: Tel. 347.109.7481 Email: *donmarco.pizzocchi@alice.it*

Loro Ciuffenna (AR): *Fattoria del Colombaio*, Str. dei 7 Ponti Levante. The first Sunday of the month at 5:30 pm.

Milan: *Oratory of St. Ambrose*, Via della Torre 38. Every Sunday and holidays at 9:00 am and 11:00 am. For information: *www.oratoriosantambrogiombc.it*

Modena: *Oratory of St. Pio V*, Via Savona 75. Every Sunday at 8:30 am and 11:00 am.

Modugno (BA): *Oratory of St. Rocco*, Via Conte Stella 26/A. For the Mass schedule,see the website

Perugia (Province): the 1st Sunday of the month.

Pescara: *Oratory of the Most Precious Blood*, via Ofanto 24. For the Mass schedule, see the website.

Pistoia: the 3rd Sunday of the month at 10:30 a.m.

Potenza: *Oratory of San Lorenzo*, Via Angilla Vecchia 126. For the Mass schedule, see the website.

Ragusa (S. Croce Camerina): one Sunday a month at 11:30 a.m. at Via Belpiano 36.

Rimini: *Oratory of San Gregorio Magno*, via Molini 8. For the Mass schedule,see the website.

Rome: *Oratory of San Gregorio VII*, via Pietro della Valle 13/B. The 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of the month, at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Rovereto (TN): *Church of St. Ignatius*, via Stazione 13, Mori Stazione. The 1st, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month at 9:00 am and 11:00 am. Program distributed by email.

St. Boniface (VR): the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 6:00 pm. Program distributed by email.

Turin: *Oratory of the Sacred Heart*, via Thesauro 3/D. Mass every Sunday and holiday at 9:00 am and 11:15 am; 1st Friday of the month at 6:15 pm.

Valmadrera (LC): Via Concordia, 21.

Varese: the 4th Sunday of the month at 5:30 pm.

Program disseminated by email.

Confessions 30 minutes before the start of Holy Mass.

For more information on the celebrations, consult the corresponding pages for each location at our website: www.sodalitium.it

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